Gloria names 7 nominees to UCPB board

STORY ON PAGE A2

e-mail: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: www.inq7.net
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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
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Bank collapses

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

UNITRUST Development Bank yesterday shut down its 12 branches because of heavy withdrawals triggered by a change in ownership and internal disputes in recent weeks. The closure affected 18,000 depositors.

In a statement, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) said it had taken over Unitrust and was checking the bank's financial condi-

BANK/ A16

IN *Saturday*SPECIAL

- Leelee Sobieski hits the bigtime
- Hollywood's 2001 odyssey
- Top girl groups compared
- Giselle Sanchez leads a double life

SOBIESKI

2 YOU leaders absent

BY TJ BURGONIO
in Manila
NESTOR P. BURGOS JR.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ON top of being suspected of involvement in the murder of Baron Cervantes, Superintendents Diosdado Valeroso and Rafael Cardeño are in danger of being declared absent without leave (Awol) by their superiors.

Director Thompson Lantion, head of the Philippine National Police's Directorate for Police Community Relations, yesterday pointed out that the two officers were in Manila and not in their respective units in the South.

2 YOU/ A4

ON THE ROAD: President Macapagal troops the line upon arrival at the Awang airport for a two-day visit to Cotabato City where she held her first ever out-of-town Cabinet meeting. EDWIN BACASMAS

Baron said to have played both sides

BY FE ZAMORA
AND CHRISTIAN ESGUERRA

A CO-FOUNDER of the Young Officer's Union said Alexander Baron R. Cervantes was an "extortionist." But a former Philippine National Police chief came to his defense.

Col. Danilo Lim said Cervantes, a self-described spokesperson of YOU, had asked for an initial P3 million in 1999 for a media plan to help then Philippine National Police chief Roberto Lastimoso, who was locked in a power-struggle with would-be PNP chief Panfilo Lacson.

Lastimoso denied that Cervantes had tried to extort P3 million from

BARON/ A4

'There's no YOU, no rift'

Co-founder says group ceased to exist after peace accord in '95

BY FE B. ZAMORA
INQ7.net

SAN MIGUEL, Bulacan—There's no rift in the Young Officers' Union (YOU). Because there's no YOU.

An Army colonel who cofounded the YOU in 1987 said the organization, which figured in a bloody coup attempt against the administration of President Corazon Aquino in 1989, "ceased to exist" when it signed a peace agreement with the Ramos administration in 1995.

A 1978 graduate of the US Military Academy in West Point, Col. Danilo Lim, deputy commander of the First Scout Rangers Regiment, denied reports that a rift in the YOU may have led to the killing of Baron Cervantes. "There is no rift," he said, stressing that YOU was disbanded when its members "resumed their careers in their respective units."

"But Cervantes wants to project that the YOU still exists by presenting himself as YOU co-founder and spokesperson," Lim told INQ7.net in an interview at Camp Tecson in this town. He said Cervantes' claims were ignored by the real YOU founders because "we also agreed with his position especially on anti-Erap (Joseph Estrada) issues."

Lim also said slain Army Captain Cervantes, who had described himself as spokesperson of YOU, "was never a participant in any of the coup attempts, much less in the founding of the YOU in 1987."

Cervantes was not among the officers involved in the 1989 coup attempt as listed in the Final Report of the Fact-Finding Commission chaired by Hilario Davide, now chief justice of the Supreme Court. Cervantes was also not among those charged in military courts in con-

THERE'S/ A4

SUDDENLY the Council on Philippine Affairs (Copa), about which President Macapagal said last August was against her, is busy holding meetings after the killing of one of their own. Attending a meeting at the Peping Cojuangco residence in Dasmariñas Village on Friday are, among others, Boy Saycon, Triccie Sison, Maria Montelibano, Peping and Tingting Cojuangco, Ching Montinola and Billy Esposo. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Drilon appeases 7 disgruntled senators

BY ROCKY NAZARENO

HAD Senate President Franklin Drilon not appeased the disgruntled senators, he would have been out even before Congress went on its Christmas break.

And there were not only "two disenchanted administration senators," as Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. put it yesterday, who were ready to bolt the majority. There were seven senators, according to an INQUIRER source who asked not to be named.

The bolting of just two senators is enough to tilt the balance in favor of the opposition at 13-11.

The Senate source noted that the reasons of the "disenchanted" senators from the majority bloc were mainly related to the passage of the 2002 national budget.

DRILON/ A16

Asia is last bastion of Bin Laden's terror network

SINGAPORE—Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network remains virtually intact in Asia despite its decimation in other parts of the world, according to Jane's Intelligence Review.

The threat of terrorist attacks on the region's non-Muslim countries such as Australia, South Korea and Japan was "considerable," the article reprinted here in the Straits Times said Friday.

Countries with substantial Muslim populations have also become vulnerable, it said citing Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines.

In the event that al-Qaida chooses to mount attacks in Asia, among the most likely targets will be non-Muslim countries and nations that have supported the US-led campaign against terrorism.

"In that context, the threats to countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Japan are considerable," it said.

"However, considering the ease with which al-Qaida could mount an operation in a Muslim country, or a country with a substantial Muslim population, countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines become vulnerable," it added.

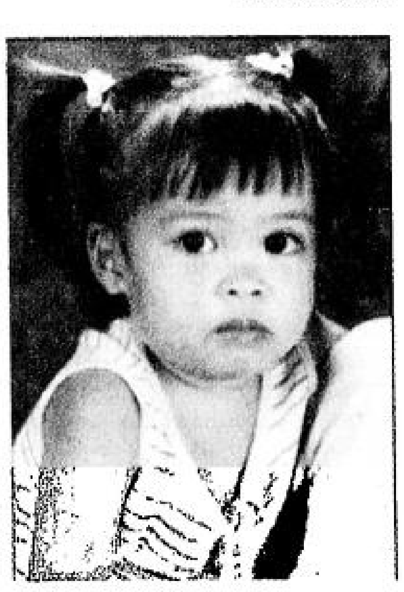
"Al-Qaida's network in the United States, Europe and East Africa has been disrupted significantly as a result of investigations and widespread arrests," according to Jane's, a respected authority on defense and security issues.

"In Asia, however, a network of cells and support structures remains virtually intact, both before and after Sept. 11," it said in a report titled "Al-Qaida's Infrastructure in Asia" in its January issue.

With al-Qaida under pressure in North America, Europe, East Africa and the Middle East, Asia "is likely to become its last bastion," the article said.

It cited al-Qaida's links with

ASIA/ A16



THE GIFT of life denied 2-year-old Jerden Sampang by US Embassy.

Denied a US visa, ailing girl loses chance of heart surgery

BY DONNA S. CUETO

FREE surgery in one of the best hospitals in New York City could have been the best New Year and birthday gift for a Filipino child afflicted with a congenital heart defect.

But the hopes of 2-year-old Jerden Sampang and her widowed mother Eden, 31, were dashed when the US Embassy in Manila denied their visa applications on Dec. 27.

Jerden's costly operation had been set for Jan. 8 at the Montefiore Medical Center in New York. It was in this hospital that heart surgery was earlier performed on 2-year-old Dajed Montojo, the first Filipino beneficiary of the US-based Gift of Life Foundation.

Heart surgeons and cardiologists, as well as officers of the foundation, had been awaiting the arrival of mother and daughter. The foster family where the two were to stay was ready to receive them.

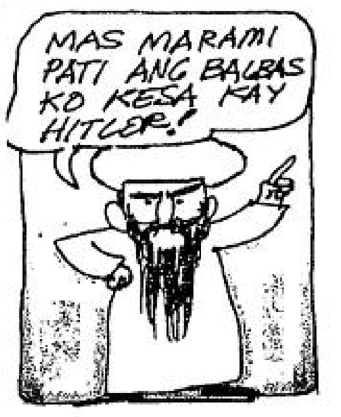
But all these went for naught with the rejection of the Sampangs' visa applications.

The Gift of Life Foundation is requesting action from the US Congress, shocked at the embassy officer's decision despite the official letters from the Montefiore hospital and the foundation itself.

Even the Sweden-based website BOES.org headed by child rights advocate Bo Eric Sandberg—who had made the life-saving surgery possible—is shocked.

DENIED/ A16

Bin Laden dislodges Hitler as most hated


MAS MARAMI PATI ANG BALBAS KO KESA KAY HITLER!

LONDON—Osama Bin Laden has toppled Adolf Hitler to become the most hated person in the world, according to a poll of visitors to London's Madame Tussaud's waxworks.

But in another poll, respondents from the other side of the global war on terrorism have another opinion, according to two Iraqi newspapers.

Not only did Iraqi respondents in Baghdad vote Bin

BIN/ A15

SANA OK SICA

GMA names 7 to UCPB board

By Romy Embile
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has submitted the names of seven nominees to the board of the United Coconut Planters Bank, whose sequestered shares a recent Supreme Court decision on the coconut levy funds allowed the government to vote.

Three of the nominees are professional bankers and four represent different coconut farmers' groups.

Nominated to head the new UCPB board was Edward Go as chair, Popoy del Rosario as president and Ramon Arceo, member.

The four nominees from the coconut farmers groups were Joey Faustino, Vic Fabe, Efren Villaseñor and a still unnamed representative.

The list of nominees also includes Ruben Carranza, commissioner of the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

The President said she wanted a dignified and win-win solution to the coconut levy funds issue.

She said it would be advantageous to the farmers if the turnover of UCPB control was handled "very well and very smoothly."

She wanted to avoid any time-consuming or costly litigation as that would only delay the farmers' getting their money back, she said.

"If we do it in a very belligerent way, it will only result in lengthy litigation," Ms Macapagal said in Taglish during dinner at the Albay governor's mansion here on Thursday.

The Supreme Court last month declared that the sequestered UCPB shares were "indisputably acquired with coco levy funds which are public in character," thus upholding the right of the government, through the PCGG, to exercise its right to vote the shares.

The UCPB is 94.29-percent sequestered with the rest of the shares held by the First United Bank.

Ms Macapagal stayed the night in Albay as a guest of Gov. Al Francis Bichara before leaving for Cotabato City where she was to meet her Cabinet yesterday.

She did not say who of the current 15 members of the UCPB board would be asked to vacate their board seats.

But industry observers believe all 15 would be eventually replaced as they are all associated with controversial businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, who allegedly engineered the purchase of UCPB using coco levy funds.

The board is chaired by Jeronimo U. Kilayko. All 14 of its directors—Juan J. Carlos, Lorenzo V. Tan, Virgilio Jacinto, Redentor T. Alegre, Albert Chua Gohu, Andres Y. Narvasa Jr., Romeo Odi, Manuel R.Pamaran, Rosario R. Razon, Danilo R. Reyes, Mila A. Reforma, Agustin P. Salgado Jr. and Rebecca A. Ynares—were nominated by the Estrada administration in 1998.

The government maintains that coconut levy funds, collected between 1973 and 1982, was used to acquire the UCPB, six oil mills and 47 percent of San Miguel Corp.

The Supreme Court ruling last month declared that the levy funds were public in character as they were collected using the police and taxing powers of the state.

The ruling may also restore government control over SMC as the UCPB administers the 27-percent stake in SMC acquired with coco levy funds, the PCGG said.

The PCGG has also recommended that the government take over immediately all UCPB subsidiaries, including the Coco Life insurance firm and six oil mills that include the Legaspi Oil Co., the Cagayan de Oro Oil Co., the Southern Luzon Coconut Oil Mills, the Granexport Manufacturing Co., and the Iligan Coconut Industries.

The oil mills own the 14 holding companies set up by the UCPB that acquired 31 percent of SMC in 1983.

The mills are, in turn, owned by the Coconut Industry Investment Fund.

The 31-percent stake was reduced to 27 percent after 3 percent was liquidated, the proceeds of which went to the national treasury.

Ms Macapagal said she expects the list of government nominees to be finalized at the Cotabato City Cabinet meeting to be followed by immediate turnover within this week.

She said that in order to maximize the benefit to the farmers, the board of the Philippine Coconut Authority has approved and submitted to the Cabinet a program for the coconut industry.

She said the very first expenditure from the coco levy funds must go to coconut industry price support.

She said the farmers stand to immediately benefit from the P700-million dividends from the coconut levy funds, which are already available.

Palace press czar blasts media

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE HEAD of Malacañang's newly created information "clearinghouse" trained his guns on the media yesterday.

Manuel Sanchez, the press undersecretary for broadcast turned chief press coordinator, denied he was out to censor or to "manage" the news.

But at the same time he blamed the media for accommodating vocal anti-government critics like Linda Montayre, the spokesperson for the People's Consultative Assembly.

Sanchez said some members of the media continued to provide Montayre with a forum despite her "very indiscriminate and reckless" accusations against the First Couple.

"It's unfortunate that the media would give (a) forum to just anyone who wants to accuse and criticize our President," he said.

"Should (the President) drop her work every time someone like Ms Montayre criticizes her? If she does that, she would not be able to accomplish anything and our country would not prosper," he said.

Sanchez, a former congressman of Rizal province, has been giving numerous interviews trying to justify his new role.

He has drawn flak from administration Sen. Joker Arroyo and the militant group, Bayan, for reportedly trying to censor Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo.

Marcelo, in an earlier interview with the INQUIRER, expressed his misgivings about the entry of the Japan-based Kirin Brewery into San Miguel Corp., saying this would dilute the value of the government's 27-percent share in the food and beverage conglomerate.

Last Wednesday, Sanchez berated Marcelo on national television for allegedly speaking out of line as the President has welcomed the $540-million Kirin investment.

Sanchez said such conflicting statements could have been avoided had Marcelo coordinated with him.

Sanchez became chief press coordinator when Ms Macapagal issued Memorandum Order No. 49 last Dec. 13 in which she told her Cabinet and heads of all government agencies to first coordinate with Sanchez before releasing any press statements, advertisements and messages.

She told them the government should "speak in one voice."

Sanchez yesterday maintained that he had not prevented Marcelo from publicly talking about the SMC-Kirin deal.

"It's not true. I have not yet spoken to SolGen Marcelo," he said.

But he said Marcelo should not have given statements that sent mixed signals to foreign investors.

"Although SolGen Marcelo is saying he was misinterpreted, the public and even the foreign investors might get confused. They might say, 'You are not speaking in one voice,'" Sanchez said.

Malacañang reporters said Sanchez's role was like that of a "clearinghouse" since the memo clearly says that all government news releases and advertisements have to go through him.

Sanchez, in two radio interviews yesterday, gave quite contradictory explanations about his role.

He said that through the new setup, Ms Macapagal was hoping that her officials would be more "accessible to the media."

"What the President wants is to open the floodgates, to present the government's activities before the public market of ideas. We won't control (information)," Sanchez said.

He said the memo "has no other purpose than for the government to speak in one voice."

"Sometimes different agencies of government have different opinions on one issue. It should not be that way. There should only be one (position) so the public will not get confused," he said.

Court asked: Can FVR, Erap run again?

By Jerome Aning

CAN former presidents Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada run again in the 2004 presidential elections?

A group calling itself Social Justice Society asked a Manila regional trial court the other day to resolve whether or not the Constitution does allow the two former presidents from making another run at the Palace.

In a three-page petition, SJS said the resolution of the issue is "imperative in view of the proximity of the 2004 elections." SJS identified itself as a political party duly registered with the Commission on Elections and with principal office at Suite 1402 Manila Astral Tower, Taft Avenue corner P. Faura Street, Ermita, Manila.

SJS President Samson S. Alcantara cited as main basis of the petition two recent news reports in the INQUIRER wherein Ramos and Estrada hinted that they might run again for president

"The people must not be left confused or uncertain," it added. "Indeed, confusion or uncertainty will lead to political instability."

The petition, docketed as Civil Case No. 02102528, has yet to be raffled to a city court.

ERAP'S PRESENTS

· ERIK ARAZAS

Residents of Teresa Street in Sta. Mesa, Manila, show off bags of goodies and calendars distributed by Sen. Loi Estrada. The former first lady visited the depressed area near the railroad tracks as part of her medical mission.

Ople asks Gloria to stop campaigning for 2004 fight

By Juan Escandor Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
and Cynthia D. Balana

OPPOSITION Sen. Blas Ople yesterday asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to "stop campaigning" for the presidency this early as the nation is still reeling from the economic crisis.

Ople said the President's appeal for a moratorium on politicking would sound more convincing and credible if she herself sets the example for a nonpartisan presidency.

"Unfortunately, there is a widespread perception that she is already campaigning full-throttle for the elections of 2004," he said at a press conference.

"She must change this perception," Ople said.

The President, who was in Sorsogon province on Thursday on the initial leg of a four-day provincial "roadshow," left her audience awed with her unfaltering commitment to fight the evils of society and protect the interests of the disadvantaged.

"Even as I am fighting the terrorists, I am fighting for you . . . even as I fight the criminals, you are always in my mind because what I want is that all of you will be freed from fear," Ms Macapagal declared.

She also told Sorsogon's people that she was fighting graft and corruption and assured them that the people's taxes would not find their way to the pockets of corrupt officials.

The President visited four towns in Sorsogon on Thursday, distributing goods, certificates of land transfer to agrarian reform beneficiaries and medical supplies to local government units.

She said she was unfazed by destabilization talks and the continuing attacks against her administration.

"I am very focused . . . I don't think the job of the President is to be reacting to everybody's comment. To me, my job is to find out how to increase the level of income of the great Filipino workers in Sorsogon, the coconut farmers," Ms Macapagal said.

She promised to release soon the dividends from the coconut levy funds lodged in the Coconut Industry Investment Fund worth P700 million.

"When the United Coconut Planters Bank board is reconstituted, the Presidential Commission on Good Government, which controls the majority (shares), can access the CIIF, and by some kind of an amicable agreement, there can be a release of the P700 million in dividends," she said.

Ms Macapagal's Sorsogon visit was memorable. She was the second President to visit the small town of Juban. The first to visit the sleepy Sorsogon town was her late father, Diosdado Macapagal.

Yesterday, Ms Macapagal visited the remote town of Jovellar in Albay where almost the same activities were held.

She was scheduled to fly yesterday afternoon to Cotabato City where she was to meet her Cabinet.

Kirin good for SMC governance, says Roxas

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TRADE Secretary Manuel Roxas II said the entry of Japan-based Kirin Brewery into San Miguel Corp. should boost the quality of governance in the food conglomerate that is currently controlled by controversial businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr.

Roxas, who chairs the government committee that is reviewing the $540-million deal for Kirin to buy into the SMC, said a strong and strategic partner like Kirin would improve the governance of SMC.

"I don't think anybody, including Kirin, would write a check for $540 million and just let anybody do what they want in the company," Roxas said.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government has accused Cojuangco, the SMC chair, and his management team led by vice chair Ramon Ang, of alleged dissipation of the company's assets since they took over the management of SMC in July 1998.

The PCGG, which has sequestered the SMC shares allegedly bought by Conjuangco with funds from the coconut levy funds, has been unable to vote its representatives to the board because the nominees of the previous Estrada administration have refused to vacate their seats.

The Roxas committee is reviewing Kirin's planned purchase of 15 percent of SMC to determine whether the deal was disadvantageous to the interest of the government and the coconut farmers, the beneficial owners of the coco levy funds.

The committee met for the second time with Kirin officials yesterday to go over the details of the shareholders agreement signed by the Japanese brewer and Cojuangco.

"We want more clarification on certain elements of this deal to ensure that the government and the farmers would not be at the short end," said Cojuangco.

Roxas believes that while the Kirin deal would be a boon to the economy—for one, it would boost the country's international reserves—it is important that the government be made a party to the shareholder agreement.

Instead of a bilateral agreement between Cojuangco and Kirin, Roxas said the government wanted a tripartite deal to ensure that the government maintains its strategic hold on the conglomerate while the ownership dispute on the sequestered shares has not been settled.

He said it was possible the deal would be approved in time for the state visit here of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Jan. 9.

Meantime, the Coconut Industry Reform Movement (COIR) condemned what it said was Cojuangco's moves to take full control of the SMC through the Kirin deal.

The COIR, a coalition of coconut peasant federations, nongovernment organizations and coconut industry reform advocates, said in a press statement that the deal would be disadvantageous to the small coconut farmers and workers and rendered the recent decision of the Supreme Court "insignificant."

The SC, which ruled the coco levy as "prima facie public funds," dispelled any notion that Cojuangco could get a strong grip of the SMC and the United Coconut Planters Bank, another business entity bought with coco levy funds, the COIR said.

The group said it was not opposed to foreign investment but believes the Kirin deal would benefit only Cojuangco who "can do anything he wants to further fatten his loot."

"Aside from the dilution of the farmers' and the government's shares (in SMC), Cojuangco will hold full control of SMC as the 15 percent share of Kirin will be entitled to 2 board seats voting with Cojuangco," the COIR said.

It commended the position taken by Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo questioning certain aspects of the deal.

Restore free text messages, NTC urged

A GROUP of cellular phone subscribers urged the National Telecommunications Commission yesterday to exercise its "powers" and restore the cut in free text messages made by Smart and Globe at the start of the year.

Anthony Ian Cruz, spokesperson of the consumer group Txtpower, said the NTC, under Republic Act 7925, has the responsibility to protect consumer interests, especially against "monopolistic" conditions.

"Even under a deregulated regime, the NTC has residual powers to act in behalf of consumers but it seems it wants to look the other way," Cruz said.

Globe and Smart, the country's major cellular phone service providers, implemented a 33-percent reduction in "free texts" for their subscribers beginning Jan. 1.

The cuts were the second of a two-part reduction scheme that started with a 33-percent cut in free texts in October 2001.

Cruz said the two telecoms firms implemented the latest reduction without prior notice to the public. *Gerald G. Lacuarta*

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Miraflor probed for alleged part in destabilization plot

By Martin P. Marfil

NAVY Lt. Senior Grade Donn Anthony Miraflor, from whose unit some 100 blocks of C4 plastic explosives and detonating devices were recovered last week, is being investigated for involvement in a destabilization plot against the government.

MIRAFLOR

Documents obtained by the INQUIRER from military intelligence sources said Miraflor would also be charged with conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

Miraflor's unit had harbored the explosives believed taken from British military ordnance in the barracks at the Sangley Point naval station in Cavite.

Interrogators said the explosives might have been brought in by British military officials who had conducted a seminar in the country earlier.

Miraflor reportedly told probers the explosives had come from members of the Philippine National Police who attended the seminar.

The intelligence report also said the Special Reaction Unit Miraflor headed under the Special Warfare Group (SWAG) attached to the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) was being investigated in the destabilization plot.

"(The) SRU is the subject of an investigation because of its alleged involvement in destabilization efforts (linked) to the opposition's plot to overthrow the government,"4 the intelligence summary said.

The military had earlier tried to downplay the coup angle in the case of Miraflor and the explosives, saying it was merely investigating Miraflor for "administrative lapses."

Authorities said the C4 explosives were enough to level all the military buildings in Metro Manila and a few government and private buildings as well.

Miraflor surrendered to intelligence agents on Dec. 28, after the explosives and detonating devices were found on Dec. 21 and 26.

On Dec. 29, Miraflor was questioned on his links to supposed coup plotters against the government, a charge the naval officer denied.

He was also questioned about supposed meetings with associates of Sen. Panfilo Lacson, former PAOCTF head and now a member of the political opposition.

Miraflor, in an affidavit, said he attended a birthday party in November and a Christmas party last month, but Lacson was not present at either affair.

He said both parties were attended by family and friends.

Miraflor has been ordered confined to quarters in Zambales pending the outcome of the investigation.

Pols 'hiding' Marcelo?

By B. Rivera and C. Pablo

WHO is harboring Pacifico "Pic" Marcelo, the shadowy head of two telecommunications companies that President Macapagal-Arroyo supposedly wanted?

Immigration chief Andrea Domingo said yesterday somebody must be "hiding" Marcelo, who has failed to appear at the Bureau of Immigration despite repeated requests to do so to prove his Filipino citizenship.

Marcelo is reportedly a naturalized American, having spent many years in the United States.

Domingo said she had heard "rumors" that Marcelo was being coddled by certain politicians.

Marcelo has accused the President of demanding a majority stake in his telecoms firms in exchange for the recall of her veto of their franchises.

Opposition senators "saved" Marcelo from immigration agents when the latter went to the Senate in November to invite the controversial businessman for questioning on his citizenship.

Marcelo had testified before the Senate committee looking into his accusation against the President and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

Domingo said BI agents have looked for Marcelo at all of his six declared Metro Manila addresses but failed to find him.

"We can't locate him, so obviously he must be in hiding," Domingo said in an interview yesterday.

She also belied reports Marcelo has left the country, saying BI records showed no one named Pacifico Marcelo left the Philippines recently.

Marcelo was given four chances to prove his citizenship, the last time on Jan. 2, but he did not show up at the BI or submit any supporting documents.

Marcelo's lawyer, Victor de la Serna, has refused to divulge his client's whereabouts and even demanded that the BI recall the arrest order it had issued against him.

Yesterday, an associate of Marcelo's said the controversial businessman has gone underground but has not fled the country.

The associate, who requested anonymity, said, "Pic has gone underground to avoid harassment by the BI," referring to the arrest order.

Marcelo could not be reached through his known mobile telephone number.

The associate laughed off rumors Marcelo was being sheltered by opposition politicians.

"Pic is not a successful businessman for nothing. He can take care of himself," the associate said of his friend who has been a player in the telecommunications industry both here and abroad.

De la Serna, meanwhile, questioned the legality of the arrest order slapped against his client.

He said Marcelo is facing a deportation case and until this has been decided with finality, the law barred Domingo from issuing an arrest order against him.

"She (Domingo) will only acquire the authority to arrest when the deportation order has become final and only for the purpose of implementing the deportation order," De la Serna said.

De la Serna also defended his actions of Jan. 3 when he supposedly "arrogantly" asked Domingo to recall the arrest order at a meeting at the BI.

"I was just trying to invoke certain rights given to my client under the law," De la Serna said.

He said the BI has refused to provide him with a copy of the arrest order.

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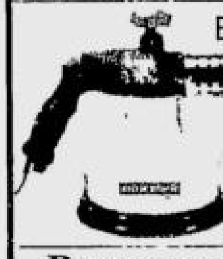

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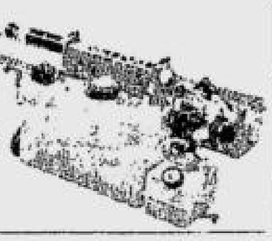

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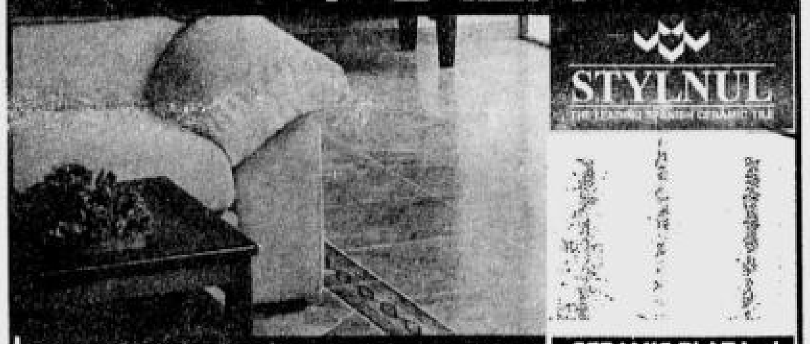

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A PHALANX of policemen cordon off the protest rally of the United Youth of the Philippines in front of the Estosan Hotel in Cotabato City while the Macapagal Cabinet is meeting.

EDWIN BACASMAS

'There's no YOU, no rift'

(From page A1)

nection with the 1989 coup attempt.

Lim said "99 percent of bona fide YOU officers and men are doing well" in their careers. They have been promoted, sent to schooling here and abroad, with some of them even at the top of their class. The other one percent opted to retire and join the private sector, he said.

"If you want to tap the YOU, then you have to go to those who were involved in 1989, to the lieutenants who are now majors and lieutenant colonels, and captains who are now full colonels. They are leading battalions, brigades. *May pwersa 'yan* (They command forces) but we are not thinking of those things anymore," Lim said.

On Dec. 1-10, 1989, Lim, who was then a captain, along with then Lt. Col. Rafael Galvez and Maj. Abraham Purruganan, led about 500 battle-ready Rangers in a siege of the Makati business district while fellow rebels from the Marines, Air Force and Army attacked the Camp Aguinaldo general headquarters of the Armed Forces in Quezon City. They also attacked the Navy facilities at Sangley Point in Cavite, the Air Force base in Villamor Air Base in Pasay City and the Mactan Air Base in Cebu City.

It was the bloodiest attempt to unseat President Aquino. The 10-day mutiny left 99 soldiers and civilians dead and 570 wounded.

As a result of the coup attempt, 2,911 soldiers were arrested and held in military stockades, joining 1,683 others who were already imprisoned for four failed attempts in 1987 and 1988.

A peace process initiated in 1991 by then Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos and then Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Lisandro Abadia resulted in the release of the detainees as a "confidence-building gesture."

In 1992, a National Unification Council was created, paving the way for the holding of peace talks. Lim, then detained in Camp Crame, was named a member of the YOU negotiating panel.

While talks were under way, the RAM-YOU-SFP—the combined groups of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa, YOU and Soldiers of the Filipino People—organized a secretariat and rented an office on Filmore Street in Makati.

Walk-in volunteer

Lim said Cervantes "walked in" to the RAM office and volunteered to help in the administrative work sometime in 1993 or 1994. "He was good in computers, so he was in," Lim remembered.

Cervantes helped in encoding the RAM-SFP-YOU master list. The names were "validated" by the officers for authenticity. Those who were "verified" were approved for amnesty.

Lim said at that time nobody bothered to check on Cervantes, who was then facing charges of desertion from the Army. When the RAM-YOU-SFP roster was finalized, Cervantes' name was already there, apparently inserted by Cervantes himself, Lim said. He added that nobody questioned it because "he had been working with us, so it was also our way of helping him."

In 1995, the YOU signed a peace accord with the government, which granted amnesty to some 4,000 members, including Cervantes, and allowed them to go back to the military and claim back pay. Those who opted to retire also availed themselves of their benefits.

Lim maintained that the amnesty automatically meant the YOU was disbanded. "When we marched back to barracks in 1989, we really marched back to barracks. The YOU ended there," he said.

YOU was organized in 1987 as an "alternative" to the RAM, Lim said, saying the RAM "was already tainted with the failed attempts and its umbilical ties to JPE (Juan Ponce Enrile, former defense minister under Ferdinand Marcos, and former senator)."

Among YOU's founders were Lim, Purruganan, Lt. Allen Capuyan of the Rangers, Captains Ariel Querubin and Juancho Sabban of the Philippine Marines, and Lieutenants Dado Valeroso, Rafael Cardeño and Washington Javier of the Philippine Constabulary.

Baron said to have played both sides

(From page A1)

him in exchange for YOU's support in his fight against Lacson.

"I would like to correct all these impressions against Baron," he told the INQUIRER Thursday night at Cervantes' wake at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel in Parañaque City.

"He was an honest man, not an extortionist or an opportunist," Lastimoso said.

The former PNP chief was reacting to Lim and YOU's allegations in a television interview right after Cervantes was murdered in Las Piñas on Dec. 31.

Lim said he learned of Cervantes media plan for Lastimoso from a reporter who complained about Cervantes' "extortion activities."

The reporter was approached by Cervantes for help in "selling a media plan" for Lastimoso. The reporter, however, sensed something fishy. The "media plan" had a big budget to buy off the media, and required a P3-million down payment. The reporter called up Lim if Cervantes was a YOU officer.

Lim called up Senior Supt. Diosdado Valeroso. "*Yong bata mo, anong pinagagawa niyan* (What has your ward been doing)?" Lim asked Valeroso. Valeroso had considered Cervantes his younger brother. Apparently Valeroso had confronted Cervantes because Cervantes would soon be on the phone explaining his side to Lim.

A very angry Cervantes also called up the reporter for maligning his reputation.

At the height of his verbal war with Lacson after Lacson replaced him as PNP chief in 1999, Lastimoso said Cervantes came to him and offered the services of YOU.

Lastimoso said Cervantes volunteered to provide him with security and intelligence work.

That time, Lacson and his men accused Lastimoso of coddling suspected drug lord Rafael Madraso.

Cervantes, Lastimoso said, submitted a proposal, which included a suggested budget for vehicles, laptop computers, meals and other operational expenses.

The fund amounted to P3 million, Lastimo said.

"I cordially declined the offer because I couldn't afford it," he said. "But it was an honest-to-goodness offer. Baron did not try to extort money from me as alleged by his enemies."

Other ventures

Cervantes' money-making ventures must have started earlier, according to YOU and other sources. In the 1998 presidential elections, Cervantes was monitored to have "offered the support of YOU" to presidential aspirant Jose de Venecia in exchange for P5 million.

Lim said Cervantes also "gave the commitment of YOU" to Vic Ladlad of the leftist Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan). "That really bothered us," Lim said.

At the height of the anti-Erap movement, Cervantes apparently found himself a vehicle for his political-financial ventures. But some groups, like the People's Consultative Assembly (PCA), started to distance itself from Cervantes when he asked for "mobilization funds," according to Linda Montayre, PCA secretary general.

Both sides

A very close friend of Cervantes, who named Supt. Rafael Cardeño as the killer, slammed YOU officers for painting a "shady image" of Cervantes.

Even before he was killed, there was a perception that Cervantes was somehow "playing" with both ends of the political spectrum, according to the source, who asked not to be named.

Despite proclaiming himself a YOU spokesperson, Cervantes was frequently seen working with militant groups.

Cervantes figured prominently during the campaign for Joseph Estrada's ouster, while working with Bayan and the Council on Philippine Affairs (Copa), according to his friend.

Bayan and Copa played key roles in the January 2001 protests that toppled the Estrada administration.

Cervantes' friend attributed his seemingly volatile political orientation to his "youth and idealism."

"He was still trying to find his place in the universe," the friend told the INQUIRER on Thursday.

During the Marcos dictatorship, Cervantes was a member of the League of Filipino Students, he said. But at Letran College, he was corps commander of the student military training program, his friend pointed out.

Before he was killed, Cervantes was contemplating on joining Bayan, the friend said.

"He was lying low when he was killed. He was about to leave the mainstream. He was about to join Bayan. I think he found his place there."

2 YOU leaders absent

(From page A1)

"Up to now they have not reported to their units," he told reporters. "When you are not reporting to your unit without any justifiable request, then you are declared absent without leave."

Lantion said Valeroso and Cardeño had neither filed an extension of leave nor written an explanation for their absence.

"That's why officials of the Directorate for Personnel and Records Management staff are looking into that and awaiting their explanation why they have not reported to their units," he said.

Valeroso, of the Young Officers Union (YOU) and Cardeño, YOU chair, were transferred last October to the office of the regional directors in Davao and Western Visayas in Iloilo, respectively, according to Lantion.

Prior to their transfer, Cardeño served as special assistant to then Land Transportation (LTO) chief Edgardo Abenina but was later relieved for his alleged involvement in anomalies. Valeroso, was assigned to a support unit inside Camp Crame.

Director General Leandro Mendoza, PNP chief, has given the go-signal to Chief Supt. Jose Gutierrez, director of the Southern Police District, to invite Cardeño and Valeroso for questioning.

"So they will be invited for investigation anytime by the SPD," Mendoza said in a press briefing.

Cardeño and Valeroso were among the six officers whom Cervantes had accused of plotting a coup against the Macapagal administration last Christmas.

The other four—retired Gen. Edgardo Abenina, Navy Capt. Proceso Maligalig, Col. Romeo Lim and Lt. Senior Grade Donn Anthony Miraflor—would also be subjected to investigation, according to police.

A close friend of Cervantes had pointed to Cardeño as the brains behind his killing. The witness said Cardeño had harbored a grudge against Cervantes for exposing his alleged involvement in anomalies in the LTO.

Valeroso, on the other hand, had a lengthy exchange of text messages with Cervantes hours before he was gunned down on Dec. 31.

Police are eyeing several motives behind Cervantes' killing, including the infighting among members of YOU, Cervantes' disclosure of the coup plot and a personal grudge.

Senior Supt. Wilfredo Blanco, deputy regional director for administration of the Police Regional Office-Western Visayas (PRO-6) headquarters, said Cardeño would be declared Awol if he failed to report by Jan. 7.

Under PNP procedures, a policeman, who fails to report to his unit for 10 days, will be declared Awol and dropped from the PNP roster.

Cardeño was directed to report at PRO-6 headquarters in Camp Martin Delgado in Iloilo City on Dec. 28.

Despite his transfer, Cardeño has not been given an assignment at the PRO-6 as he has yet to comply with the procedures such as a physical examination and courtesy calls on the different departments in the PRO-6.

"We still have to find out what assignment will be suited for him but right now we have nothing in mind for him," Blanco said.

Cardeño has been silent since the death of Cervantes. But Valeroso has been talking to the media to deny that he had a hand in the killing of Cervantes.

Valeroso yesterday explained his leave of absence. He said he filed an application for leave last December and a 30-day extension on Jan. 2 so he would have ample time "to answer the charges against me."

He said his superior, Chief Supt. Simeon Dizon, director of Region 9, had approved his application for leave.

"My leave is well documented. He (Lantion) got his information wrong. He should have checked his facts first," he said in a mobile phone interview.

Since being transferred to Region 9, Valeroso has reported for work only once in November and once in December. He said he had to file a leave during those two months so he could take care of a newly born child.

He also corrected Lantion that he was not assigned in Davao but in Zamboanga.

Sketch, footage

Hours before he was shot, Cervantes had delivered to Pastor "Boy" Saycon, secretary general of the Council on Philippine Affairs (Copa), an intelligence report detailing the alleged coup plot and containing the names of the plotters.

When shown a police sketch of the gunman based on witnesses' description, Saycon said the suspect closely resembled one of the three unidentified persons who accompanied Cardeño and Valeroso to a Copa Christmas party on Dec. 18 in Makati City.

Copa had invited members of YOU and the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa (RAM) to the party to try to reconcile their feuding members.

Police yesterday played a footage of the Christmas party that ABS-CBN had provided to enable a witness to identify the assailant from among the party guests based on an artist's sketch.

"(T)he coverage of the footage was limited. So the witness didn't see anything," Director Nestorio Gualberto, head of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), said in a press conference. Copa doesn't have a video tape of the party.

Gualberto asked other TV networks such as GMA-7 and ABC 5 to furnish investigators their footage of the party.

"What we are doing now is that we are asking all the TV stations to provide us footage of the Copa party since they also covered it," he said.

"Based on the sketch, we are following some leads that will identify the gunman," PNP Chief Mendoza he said in the same press briefing.

"Some are saying that (the suspect) is a civilian. Others are saying he's an ex-military man or an ex-policeman," Mendoza said when further pressed on the identity of the suspect.

Mendoza hinted that police were still in the process of establishing the motive behind the killing.

"We had a case conference yesterday (Thursday). What we see here is a rift among YOU members. Another motive is personal," he said, adding that police would also determine if Cervantes' exposé of the destabilization plot had anything to do with his killing.

Also yesterday, Dante Jimenez and Lauro Vizconde, chair and vice chair of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, respectively, turned over to the PNP the Cervantes report on the alleged LTO anomalies to help police establish the motive in his murder.

Jimenez said Cervantes' report pertained to an insurance anomaly involving LTO's top officials. He declined to elaborate.

"It (report) has substantial information because previous events led to some administrative relief of some personnel in the LTO," Jimenez said.

Cervantes turned the documents over to the VACC in October last year, according to Jimenez.

JOAN BONDOC

PREPARING for the first anniversary of Edsa II, the People Power monument gets a good scrubbing.

Nur lawyer makes final appeal

KUALA LUMPUR—An associate of renegade Moro leader Nur Misuari yesterday made a final appeal to Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad to set him free, saying all reasons for his detention were no longer valid.

"All Malaysian assumptions upon which his detention were based have either disappeared or shown to be non-existent with unfolding events," Elly Pamatong, a United States-based lawyer claiming to be Misuari's family counsel, said in a letter to Mahathir.

He said Malaysian police had found that Misuari, charged by the Philippine government with rebellion, was not linked to any terrorist group, and that there were no other valid reasons for the detention of the former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Pamatong appealed to Mahathir to release Misuari "for the sake of his nine children, in the name of his supporters, and in the name of the millions of Muslims in (the) southern Philippines who look upon him as their best chance to live their own Islamic way of life."

Pamatong later said he had now exhausted all means in a long campaign to have Misuari released.

"This is my last appeal, because I think the only person who can decide on this case is the Prime Minister," Pamatong said.

"I have said more than enough to convince him and I don't think any more letters will persuade him to release Misuari."

The 60-year-old Misuari and six followers were arrested in the Malaysian state of Sabah on Nov. 24 for illegal entry after fleeing a short-lived rebellion in Mindanao.

The attacks were launched to derail elections to choose his successor as governor of the ARMM, which he had held since his Moro National Liberation Front signed a peace pact with the government in 1996.

EDWIN BACASMAS

PRESIDENT Macapagal shares a light moment with Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jess Dureza and ARMM Governor Parouk Hussin after her press conference in Estosan, Cotabato City.

Misuari's family believes he will not get a fair trial if he is deported back to the Philippines and has sought to have him tried in a third country.

But the Philippine government said it would seek to have Misuari returned this month.

A team composed of police, diplomats, justice and military officials has been formed to escort Misuari from Malaysia back to Manila to face the rebellion charges.

Mahathir has said Malaysia, which once provided sanctuary to the MNLF in the 1970s and 1980s, would not hand Misuari over to a third country. *AFP*

Keep Misuari out of RP, says Hussin; Pimentel backs exile

By Julie S. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The newly elected governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao would prefer his predecessor, Nur Misuari, to stay out of the country.

ARMM Gov. Parouk Hussin said yesterday he would try to convince President Macapagal-Arroyo not to bring back Misuari to avoid tension and conflict with his loyal followers.

"It would not be helpful if Misuari is brought back and to have the (rebellion) case against him tried here as it might make his loyalists very emotional," Hussin told reporters here in Filipino.

Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel said he favors exile for Misuari and a total ban on his return to the country.

But while calling for Misuari's exile, Pimentel said Misuari's claim that he had fled to Malaysia after the Philippine government plotted to kill him and his associates was "totally untrue."

Speaking at the Rembrandt Hotel forum yesterday, Pimentel said Misuari's exile would free the government from "additional burdens," including the lengthy litigation of the rebellion case against him.

The government said it has arranged to have Misuari repatriated from Malaysia, where he has been detained since Nov. 24, to face rebellion charges for allegedly leading an uprising in Sulu and Zamboanga in which more than 100 people perished.

It was not clear whether Hussin wanted Misuari to remain in Malaysia or to be sent to a third country.

The Malaysian government has issued an ultimatum to the Philippine government to get Misuari or he would be released.

Although arrested for illegal entry, Misuari is not facing any charges in Malaysia, a member of the Committee of the Eight of the 57-member Organization of the Islamic Conference of Muslim-led nations.

Col. Francisco Gudani, deputy chief of the military's Southern Command said Misuari still commands a following among Muslims in several areas of Jolo island.

Amid fears of tension because of the imminent return of the renegade Moro leader, Hussin said he went to Sulu to talk with Misuari loyalists.

He said at least 50 of them vowed to work with the new leadership of the Moro National Liberation Front.

Misuari was ousted by his top lieutenants as chair of the MNLF, and replaced him with the Council of 15.

Malacañang is pushing for the Council of 15, which includes Hussin, to replace Misuari who holds observer status in the OIC.

3 women kidnapped by Pentagon gang

By Dennis Jay Santos
and Anthony S. Allada
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—Three women, including the daughter of a wealthy local family, were abducted Thursday by suspected members of the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom gang.

Supt. Akmad Mamalinta, regional deputy police chief, identified the victims as Ma. Cecilia Bonifacio, 22, whose family owns Bonifacio Motors in Sasa District here, her secretary Fe Jayno and Norma Jayno. It was not known how the Jaynos were related.

A highly placed military source said the Pentagon gang pulled off the kidnapping and was demanding P5 million from the Bonifacio family for the release of their daughter.

Maj. Gen. Roy Cimatu, AFP Southern Command chief, confirmed the ransom demand, but declined to categorically say the Pentagon gang was behind the kidnapping.

Mamalinta also refused to confirm it was the Pentagon gang that pulled off the abduction, although the group was believed responsible for several recent abductions in Mindanao, including that of Italian priest Giuseppe Pierantoni who continues to be held captive.

The Pentagon gang was also responsible for the kidnapping of four Chinese nationals in Central Mindanao last year in which two of the victims died, one was able to escape and the last was released.

Two days before last Christmas, police raided a jungle camp and rescued a Canadian man who had been held hostage by the gang for two months.

Police killed two members of the gang in that clash, officials said.

The abduction of Bonifacio and the Jaynos occurred despite repeated assurances by local police that Davao City was safe from the kidnap gang.

Several armed men reportedly forced Bonifacio and the Jaynos from the family's car dealership in Sasa, which is about one kilometer from the Bonifacio residence.

Mamalinta said the group dragged the victims into a blue Toyata Rav 4 with plate number LDM 555.

The Bonifacio family refused to comment on the abduction.

Mayor Rodrigo Duterte said the family has asked government officials to stay away from the case. ***With an AP report***

2 soldiers die in ambush

By Hernan P. de la Cruz
and Ayan C. Mellejor
PDI Mindanao Bureau

PAGADIAN CITY—Communist rebels killed two government troops and wounded another in an ambush in Lapuyan town Thursday morning.

Brig. Gen. Angel Atutubo, deputy chief of the Army's 1st Infantry Division, said a team of soldiers and militiamen were patrolling in Barangay Mahalingob when suspected members of the New People's Army attacked them.

Atutubo said the soldiers had gone to the village after receiving complaints from local officials and residents about the NPA's collection of "illegal taxes" from them.

Col. Jet Velarmino, commanding officer of the 51st Infantry Battalion to which the soldiers belonged, said the team was scouring a hill in the village when the rebels fired upon them.

The soldiers fought back, but the rebels were in an "advantageous position," Velarmino said.

He said a soldier and a militiaman were killed in the 20-minute attack, while another militiaman was wounded.

In Davao City, the National Democratic Front yesterday asked the government to strictly enforce the Suspension of Military and Police Operations (Somo/Sopo) in five provinces in Mindanao before it would release a military sergeant and three other "prisoners of war" from its custody.

The NDF said it was only waiting for the "order of release for Sgt. Jeremias Rosete and three other POWS who are in the custody of the Valentin Palamine Command of the NPA."

The NPA seized Rosete, a military intelligence officer, and civilians Pepito Simbulan, Wilfredo Maldecir and Herminia Sorongon on Sept. 4 last year while the four were on their way to negotiate the surrender of several NPA rebels in Columbio, Sultan Kudarat. ***With a report from Joey Sem Dalumpines, PDI Mindanao Bureau, and AFP***

DOJ orders new probe of 2 Sino kidnap suspects

By Christine Herrera
and Norman Bordadora

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice yesterday ordered a reinvestigation into a kidnapping case involving seven Chinese suspects, after charges against two of them were downgraded by a prosecutor in San Fernando, La Union, supposedly at the request of the Chinese Embassy in Manila.

The charges against the two suspects, Zhang Du, 35, and Zhang Xiwang, 20, were downgraded to mere accessories, thus allowing them to post bail of P100,000 each and reportedly flee the country.

DOJ Secretary Hernando Perez said his department received a report that San Fernando Assistant City Prosecutor Oscar Corpus downgraded the kidnapping charges against the two suspects after the Chinese Embassy made the request.

Because of his action, Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño directed Corpus to "immediately report and submit" the records in the kidnapping of Jacky Rowena Tiu, a businesswoman of San Fernando City.

Tiu was kidnapped in September and was released after her family reportedly paid P10 million to her abductors.

Perez said a request by an embassy "did not qualify as evidence."

"It's not for the (Chinese) Embassy to decide on the guilt or innocence of the kidnappers," Perez said.

In a note verbale to Corpus, the Chinese Embassy had reportedly vouched for the innocence of the two suspects.

"The note verbale was not evidence. It was just a request. Besides, it (the kidnapping) was a conspiracy where the act of one is the act of all," Perez said.

"We will evaluate the evidence. A reinvestigation has been scheduled on Jan. 11. We want him (Corpus) to turn over the records of the case to the DOJ immediately," Zuño said.

The seven were arrested in Room 467 of the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel where the P10-million ransom was reportedly recovered.

The Chinese Embassy yesterday replied to Perez's statement on the downgrading of the charges against the Chinese suspects.

Wang Luo, embassy spokesperson, said that while Chinese consul general Zhu Tao Ying was not in a position to judge the guilt or innocence of the two suspects, the request was not totally out of order.

"The Chinese Embassy was only exercising its rights and obligations accorded by the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations to protect the legal and justified interests of Chinese nationals," Luo said in a statement.

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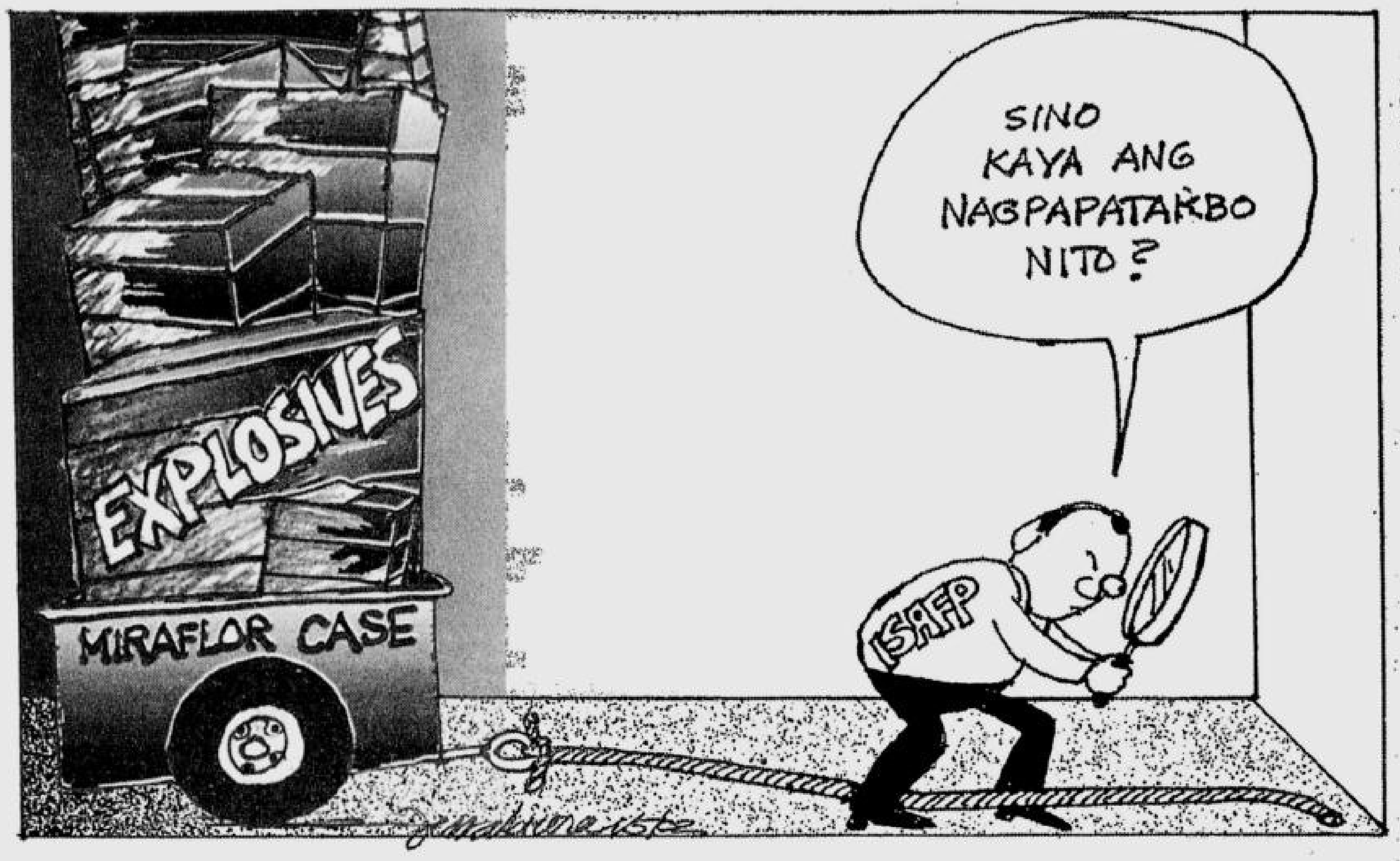

Fire sale?

EDITORIAL

MOODY'S Investors Service says economic prospects remain gloomy for the Philippines at least for the next year and half. Standard and Poor's is also expected to give the country another poor rating when it completes its review during the first quarter of 2002. But Speaker Jose de Venecia sees not only light at the end of the tunnel but a dazzling blaze as the economy blasts off to recovery and growth before the year is over. A "dramatic recovery for the Philippine economy" is what De Venecia anticipates if Lehman Brothers, a US-based international investment bank, makes good its offer to put up a $1-billion Philippine Economic Recovery Fund.

In a letter to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Lehman's chief executive for Asia Pacific, Jasitt Bhattal, outlined the investment areas in which his company would put its money. One is for the purchase of non-performing loans and residential mortgage portfolios and real estate assets such as those being held by the Philippine National Bank and the Land Bank as well as other government and private financial institutions. Another is the development of new housing projects for the middle and lower classes and other economic development projects. Still another is to take the lead in the development of the capital market through the issuance of securities backed by performing residential mortgages, government royalties from the Malampaya natural gas project and similar assets. Bhattal also said Lehman was prepared to bring to the Philippines "similar levels of capital and expertise" as the ones they now have in Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia.

If indeed Lehman—or any other group—puts that kind of money in the Philippines, De Venecia will shed off his reputation as a prophet of boom (or is it bombast?). As Bhattal put it, such a huge investment fund could spur the recovery of the banking, real estate and infrastructure sectors and stimulate commercial activities throughout the economy. More than this, it could lead other investors to take a second look at the Philippines and possibly create a major flow of investments.

Interestingly, Lehman is not the only foreign investment house to show great interest in buying the bad loans of Philippine banks, which are now estimated to reach P470 billion. Merril Lynch and Goldman Sachs have also been reported to be interested in what businessmen call the asset management and disposition business. In fact, another US company, Cerberus Ltd., has beaten everyone to the draw by signing two memorandums of understanding with the Philippine government in which it committed to invest as much as $1.5 billion in the same line of business.

All this interest in acquiring non-performing loans and mortgages and idle assets cannot but stir up some curiosity among those who watch from the sidelines. If foreign companies are rushing in, why are local firms shying away from the business? What is it that the foreign companies see in those loans and assets that Filipino firms do not see? Are Filipino investors missing some rich opportunities here? Or do they just lack the resources, the managerial savvy or the spirit of enterprise and risk-taking?

One danger here is that in the administration's eagerness to bring in the promised billions, it would hold a fire sale of the non-performing loans and real estate assets in the possession of government banks and other financial institutions. Fortunately, there will be plenty of bases for comparison since the private banks, including the biggest in the country, will also be holding similar sales of their own. But even that is no guarantee that some smart men in government would not try to sell the Filipino people short.

In these difficult times, the mere suggestion of interest in investing in this country is music to everyone's ears. An outright offer to invest may be enough to make everyone deaf and blind to the most onerous conditions. Since huge sums are involved, there is all the more reason for the people to keep their eyes open.

One Europe

FOREIGN COMMENT

THE UPCOMING days will be crucial for the euro. It is encouraging that (euro) D-Day was marked more by curiosity and amazement than by anger and discontentment.

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The Lacson case on deck

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

SEN. Joker Arroyo called me up the other week to inform me, in answer to the questions I raised in my column of Dec. 16, that the three committees jointly handling the Lacson investigation had terminated their reception of evidence from the parties and were now in the process of examining it.

The three committees are the blue ribbon committee he heads, the committee on local government under Sen. Robert Barbers, and the committee on national defense and security chaired by Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.

I reminded Joker that there were other witnesses besides Victor Corpus and Mary Ong who wanted to testify in the case, but he said the committees felt they had heard enough testimony to reach a decision on Sen. Panfilo Lacson's alleged drug trafficking.

The charge of money-laundering will have to be dismissed pending receipt by our justice department of the requested report from the US government about Lacson's bank accounts, if any, in that country. The dismissal will be without prejudice, meaning that the charge may again be filed when that report is received.

To ensure an objective and impartial decision, the three committees have commissioned an independent law firm to evaluate the evidence submitted at the hearings. Arroyo did not give me the name of the firm, nor did I ask. Its conclusions, while not binding on the committees, could be the basis of their own report that they will submit to the Senate and, I hope, release to the public.

That report, as I understood it from Senator Arroyo, will be ready by mid-January.

His assurance will at least allay the fears of many people that the Lacson case had simply been swept under the rug to be eventually forgotten. Having myself earlier expressed this misgiving, I am glad that the Senate will soon come out with a definite ruling one way or the other on the charge against one of its own.

I cannot speculate on how the committees will decide the case against Lacson although I personally hope they will find him guilty. I followed the hearings assiduously and am convinced that Corpus and Ong were telling the truth, compared to Reynaldo Acop and his fellow defenders of their chief.

As Lacson's star witness, Acop was a disaster. He practically testified against himself and by inference against Lacson as his immediate superior.

There were many holes in his written statement which, to say the least, admitted his own incompetence as former NarcGroup head in combating the massive illegal drug operations of the Hong Kong triad in this country. He blamed the connivance of some persons in various agencies of our government but could not or would not name any of them. He also could not satisfactorily explain his check payments to Ong of admittedly public funds drawn from his personal account.

A legislative investigation is not a criminal case requiring proof beyond reasonable doubt for the conviction of the accused. The probe of Lacson's direct involvement in drug trafficking in his capacity as head of the PAOCTF and later of the PNP is in the nature of an administrative proceeding only. This is true even if the investigators in Congress are of a decidedly higher status than in most other administrative proceedings.

Substantial evidence only, not even the preponderance of evidence required in civil cases, is the criterion in administrative cases. In his excellent work on Evidence, the recently deceased Justice Ricardo J. Francisco, an eminent authority on Remedial Law, defined substantial evidence as "that amount of relevant evidence which a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to justify a conclusion."

Legislative investigations are supposed to be held only "in aid of legislation," but their findings may lead to the indictment of the respondent in a criminal case, where the quantum of evidence required to convict is higher. The proceeding will be judicial, with the technical rules of procedure strictly observed. Such rules are not mandatory in administrative cases where they may be dispensed with in the interest of justice and equity.

The issues in the drug trafficking case being mainly factual, much will depend on the credibility of the witnesses. Inconsistencies may suggest inventiveness or mendacity but not when they are only minor lapses and do not impair the veracity of the testimony as a whole. The manner of the witness on the stand may reveal many telltale signs that will not be lost on the observant judge.

The ready answer or the hesitant reply, the steady gaze or the shifty eyes, the flush of face or the sudden pallor, the confident posture or the slumped stance—these and many other clues will draw the line between fact and fabrication and tell the perceptive magistrate if the witness is telling the truth or lying in his teeth.

Factual findings of the trial court are as a rule accepted by the appellate court, which does not have the opportunity to assess the conduct of the witnesses but can rely only on the inanimate and impersonal *rollo*. The senators who attended the Lacson hearings had the opportunity to personally observe the demeanor of Corpus, Ong, Acop and the other witnesses and can decide for themselves how to separate the goats from the sheep.

Lacson himself did not choose to take the stand in his defense, probably believing the evidence against him was insufficient and did not have to be refuted. He was gambling that his colleagues in the Senate, exercising their own discretion, would agree with him and resolve all doubt in his favor. *Pakikisama* in the old boys' club could work for him, but there is also the backlash of an unpopular verdict that might break that traditional bond.

I hope the decision of the committees, whatever it will be, will be based on a fair appreciation of the facts and the law, regardless of personal or partisan ties or the compulsions of the "hooting throng."

A positive-sum game

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

BY LAST count the number of registered non-government organizations (NGOs) in the country hovered around the 30,000 mark. While a significant minority can be characterized as either opportunists or dummies, the great majority are committed to help their less fortunate brethren in one way or another.

But while the latter are long on ideals and commitment, they are generally short on resources. And so they are forced to spend a great deal of their time making the rounds, hat in hand, of aid-granting agencies, which are usually foreign and which themselves are funded either by their respective governments or by privately endowed foundations.

Pretensions to the contrary notwithstanding, the funds available tend to be tied in one way or another to the objectives of the aid-giving organizations abroad, which may not particularly jibe with either the objectives of the local NGOs' or with the country's development needs. So our NGOs are faced with two choices: either they dance to the tune that their donors are playing, or go their own way, with their ideals intact but with scarcely two pennies to rub together, not knowing or not sure where the funds for their next project will come from.

Not exactly an ideal situation, particularly for a sector whose contributions to improvements in the country's governance have been nationally and internationally recognized.

Which is why praise should be heaped on the Caucus of Development NGO Networks, or CODE-NGO, which represents over 2,500 NGOs all over the country. It has pulled off what can only be considered a brilliant financial coup, raising P1.3 billion for an endowment fund that will assure a steady flow of resources (something like P130 million a year at 10-percent interest rates) for worthy anti-poverty projects not only of its members but of other NGOs as well. No strings. No ass-licking. Total independence. That has got to be NGO heaven.

I doubt that there is any other NGO in the world that has been able to raise that much for an endowment fund on its own, unless it was given an outright grant by a multibillionaire philanthropist. Ask any legitimate NGO, by the way, and you will be told that international grant-giving agencies never contribute to an endowment fund for an NGO—because then, of course, they lose control.

How did CODE-NGO swing it? A combination of determination, street-smarts and serendipity. It wanted to be free from the hassle of begging for money, but knew it didn't have a clue as to how to go about raising its own funds. So it went outside its world and approached people who did that sort of thing for a living: investment bankers, financial consultants.

That's how it got the idea of a bond float in the first place. And like every good idea, it evolved into an even better idea as flaws and obstacles were corrected or surmounted—from floating bonds directly to trading in government securities, to getting the government to finally (it had been considering the move for a long time already) float zero-coupon bonds, to enhancing the value of those bonds, to working with a government securities dealer.

In the process, CODE-NGO increased its network of relationships, partnering with individuals, institutions and agencies that it had never worked with before. Wittingly or unwittingly, it was applying one of the strategies advocated by the UNDP Human Development Report for achieving a human development goal (eliminating poverty, specifically): networking, going into partnerships, not only among NGOs but with other sectors—in this case with those in business and government—whose own interests would be served at the same time. In short, CODE-NGO brokered a win-win-win situation at a multisectoral level. A positive-sum game, to wit:

CODE-NGO netted P1.3 billion and is now financially independent.

Its financial consultants got their fees (as well as now being experts in this kind of deal).

The bank (RCBC) which bought and sold the bonds on CODE-NGO's behalf received its commission. That it has opted to keep the bonds rather than sell it to others is a dead giveaway that it is sure that the money it "lost" by effectively paying a premium is small relative to the financial benefits it gains from the new products and uses it has created and will create from the zero-coupon bonds in its possession.

The government benefited not only because the interest rate it has to pay on the zero-coupon bonds was about one-percentage point less than the going rate for equivalent securities, but that the results of the auction has had a downward effect on the rates of interest on other government securities.

And the poor will benefit from the additional poverty-alleviation funds.

Great, all around, right? Unfortunately, though, instead of getting congratulated for a job well done, everyone involved—and even those who were not involved—have been accused of either cupidity or stupidity.

This really reflects on the ignorance, or envy, or political opportunism of the critics. Crab mentality, in short. Without which we would all be much better off.

No ‘casus belli’ for coup–Gonzalez

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

NOT too long ago, I had a brief chat with Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez of Iloilo and I queried him about all the rumors of a coup by military elements. He pooh-poohed it immediately, saying *wala iyan*, and stressing that there has to be a basis for military elements to be able to carry out a coup successfully, a *casus belli*, and at the moment there is none. The military are not that stupid and the people won't support a coup, Gonzalez said. He pointed out that even during the time of President Cory Aquino, the military couldn't pull off a successful coup even though the only thing going for Cory was the people's memory of Ninoy Aquino and the Edsa spirit.

* * *

What about the allegations about corruption in the Macapagal administration coming from leaders of the so-called Philippine Consultative Assembly, Linda Montayre and Salvador Enriquez? Gonzalez replied: “Who is this Montayre? What are her credentials?” He noted that Montayre seems to have a big credibility problem arising from accusations leveled against her by her own brother, Marcos fighter Ed Olaguer, which she has failed to rebut. Gonzalez also noted that Montayre's motives against Ms Macapagal are suspect, inasmuch as she began hitting the government after her husband was eased out of the PCSO for involvement in some shady deals.

As for Enriquez, Gonzalez noted that many members of Congress still resent the former budget secretary because of the 25-percent mandatory reserve he imposed on their CDFs when he headed the DBM. Now the reserve has been set at only 10 percent.

* * *

I agree with Gonzalez's observation about the need for a *casus belli*. Before people will support a move against the administration, there has to be a broad disenchantment with it, the way the people rose up against Estrada during Edsa II because of his and his family's perceived corruption, as revealed during the Senate impeachment trial. There is now no public perception of corruption of an intolerable magnitude despite the efforts of the minority senators to recruit witnesses of low credibility such as Robert Rivero and Pacifico Marcelo. In addition, the people are tired of all these coup rumors and yearn for stability, for they realize that such talk only serves to diminish prospects of an early economic recovery.

Speaking of Rivero and Marcelo, the minority senators sponsored them to the point of stage-managing their appearances for high media effect and even drafting their statements. Unfortunately they were discredited as witnesses. Marcelo failed to present any documents about his claimed Filipino citizenship and Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo has threatened to arrest him as well as his lawyer, Vic de la Serna, for defying her summons to appear before her. Now it seems that Marcelo has flown the coop.

* * *

But the administration should be aware that talk of corruption is still going around. One reason is that people close to the First Family freely drop their names while trying to bag deals. A friend's son was shocked to be propositioned by a young vice mayor whom he met in Baguio just two weeks earlier about some juicy deals with a government corporation. The vice mayor claimed to be very close to the President's son Mikey and said he and Mikey were into some deals. “*Ayusin mo ang kontrata at kami na ang bahala sa iyo; wala kang sabit*,” said the vice mayor, who then handed him Mikey's calling card. The President has to deal with this problem more firmly if talk of corruption is to stop.

* * *

The Philippine Star's banner story by Efren Danao yesterday spoke about an impending coup in the Senate that would put the leadership in the hands of the opposition. The source was Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel, who seems to be already counting the days before he reassumes the Senate presidency. He hinted that two majority senators would break away from the majority and join the opposition.

The story made good copy, but it may be less than realistic. With 13 senators forming the majority, the 11-member opposition needs two more votes to oust Senate President Franklin Drilon. If the opposition can convince just one senator to switch to their side, the status quo remains.

The story made Sen. John Osmeña immediately suspect because of his earlier threat to abandon the majority if the Cebu customs collector was not removed. But Osmeña has since gotten assurance about this from the Palace. I doubt if the crusty Cebuano senator would cross over to the other side. He may be unhappy about some facets of the administration, but I suspect he's even unhappier about his former Erap colleagues such as Sen. Edgardo Angara.

* * *

For most people the “usual suspects” to bolt the majority were Senators Noli de Castro and Ramon Revilla, whose son-in-law, Sen. Robert Jaworski, is with the minority. De Castro was said to be a bit disgruntled when finance committee chair John Osmeña failed to give him a subcommittee during the budget deliberations, the only majority senator not to get one. But this isn't enough reason for De Castro to bolt. For one thing, Sen. Rene Cayetano, who is his fellow ABS-CBN star and mentor, would certainly know about it, since the two are quite close. Cayetano has been zealously guarding Drilon's flanks not only out of friendship (they were a one-two punch in the Senate impeachment trial) but also for a selfish reason: they have a deal in which Cayetano will serve as Senate president during the second half of their term.

Also it is widely believed that De Castro won't make a move without the blessing of his bosses, the Lopezes. And right now, with their financial empire quite shaky and many of their foreign loans maturing in the near future, the Lopezes' interests would doubtless be better served by a friendly cooperation with Ms Macapagal rather than cavorting with the allies of their in-law, Joseph Estrada.

* * *

As for Revilla, I doubt if he'd bolt. Drilon, who calls him “Don Ramon,” has really been pampering him, giving him the chairmanship of the public works committee. Besides, if Revilla were to move to the minority, he'd be thrown into the company of his political enemies in Cavite, such as former Gov. Juanito Remulla and incumbent Gov. Ayong Maliksi, who trounced his son Bong in the last elections. Revilla will wind up his second term in 2004 and he has no other ambition than to wrest the governorship from Maliksi, avenging Bong's defeat. If Revilla is to realize that dream, he has to assess where his chances are better: With the opposition or with Drilon and President Macapagal?

The quest continues

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

BLAME it on deadline pressure or frustration, but I got my titles confused. “Lord of the Rings” is the name of the trilogy of which “The Fellowship of the Ring” is the first installment. (The other books are “The Two Towers” and “Return of the King.”)

Whew, having gotten that grievous error off my chest, let me proceed with the account of my noble quest to view the cinematic version of “Lord of the Rings” at least before the thundering hordes remove every last bit of novelty or bragging rights from the experience.

We did get to see the movie Thursday evening at a late-night screening that drew the faithful. (Wonder what devotees of Tolkien and “Lord of the Rings” are called? If there are Trekkies, are there Tolkies?) When I called, I was told there would be a 10 p.m. screening but we should start lining up for tickets at 9:45 since there had been “so many calls asking about the screening.”

When we got to Movieworld, we saw a sign inviting the public to a screening at 11:20, which meant basically we had about four or so hours to kill before being transported to Middle Earth. We decided to pass the time by watching “Bahay ni Lola,” which was showing in the same theater where “Lord of the Rings” was to be shown.

“Bahay ni Lola,” by the way, nearly had us swearing off movies forever, but by the time we stepped out of the theater, we were startled to find a queue that stretched from one end of corridor to the other. Everyone had the expectant glow of first communicants, or of children waiting to sit on Santa's lap, or sailors on shore leave lined up at the best brothel in town. It was all we could do not to run over the ticket-takers while we waited for the movie house to be cleared.

* * *

SO, that little adventure told, what is the movie like?

How does one put it? Someone asked me just now if it's true that “Lord of the Rings” “massacres” “Harry Potter.” What was I, who otherwise did cartwheels over the boy wizard, supposed to say to that?

Well, maybe we could start by saying the movies are two very different movies. As were “Lord of the Rings” and the still-unfinished “Harry Potter” series two very different forms of literature. J.K. Rowling, even as she basks in the status of the world's most famous, if not richest, writer, surely would not presume to have scaled the heights or achieved the grandeur of Tolkien. Another columnist wrote recently that the reason he couldn't lose himself in the world of Hogwarts and muggles was that he felt the author was “winking” at her readers even as she attempted to create an alternate universe. But I think that's precisely the charm and pleasure of the “Harry Potter” books. They never really lose their footing in reality and the present. We may be reading about wizards and dragons and potions. But Harry and his friends are also dealing with making new friends, finding family, discovering one's self. Your basic human dilemmas wrapped up in fantasy.

* * *

THESE, too lie at the center of “Lord of the Rings.” But in Tolkien's hand, these “issues,” acquire depth and gravity, solemnity and soaring beauty. Tolkien never once “winks” at 20th century readers (he began writing the novels in the 1930s and were finally published in 1954), being fully engrossed in the creation of a world at once very personal and yet filled with universal references. The wonder of the trilogy is not that the novels “read” like classics written in the age of epics, but that the books can connect so immediately and intimately with contemporary readers.

In this “HP” and “LOR” are quite alike.

Those who love Frodo, Gandalf and their noble quest must have been fairly bursting with both excitement and fear at the news of the film trilogy's making. There was much potential for transcendent experience, as well as for abysmal disappointment. Walking out of the movie house at nearly 3 in the morning, I felt like I'd been transported to another dimension.

The film version of “Lord of the Rings” is not just faithful to the details of the story, or recreates with stunning authenticity the wondrous images created by Tolkien's pen. It is faithful to the tone and spirit of the books, and takes audiences by the hand and leaps with them into the void—into an entire universe and moral order.

* * *

THERE are special effects galore, dazzling sights (Lothlorien, the elvin queen Galadriel's realm, presents itself as a dream), and breathtaking battle scenes. But these bits of movie magic work mainly because we hardly notice the technical wizardry, so taken are we by the heroic tale. In this creation of Tolkien's reality, the cinematic magic serves the plot and characters, they move events along, and, wrapped up in the wondrous context of a Middle Earth in mortal crisis, we accept it as possible and believable.

The acting is wonderful. Elijah Wood at first seemed much too handsome for a Hobbit, but he carried well the mix of innocence and pluck, strength of character and reluctant heroism that make Frodo such a memorable character. Ian McKellen as Gandalf lends wondrous dignity to the wizard, and there are bits of brilliant interpretation among the supporting cast.

Finally, even if you haven't read any of the books yet, do make the effort to watch the movie. You can follow the story without need for reference. Indeed, an acquaintance with the written work may lead to some confusion. I kept wondering when some memorable scene would pop out, and each time my daughter had to remind me: “That's in the second book, Mom.” But if the film makes you curious about the books, I'm telling you, the written world of Tolkien will enthrall you, and deepen and enrich the adventure of watching “Lord of the Rings.”

It wasn't what it seemed

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

BEFORE THE EVENTS of Sept. 11, most of us were not particularly aware of the circumstances affecting the situation in the Middle East. Meeting a representative of Arafat in the arid plains of Cyprus, I was taken aback when he said that the conflict could be traced to the Crusades dating a thousand years ago. Remember that we were brought up to believe once that the Church could do no wrong and that the Muslims and anyone else who wasn't Catholic were infidels or heretics. I believe the Church has since apologized but events down the ages haven't improved matters much.

I noticed too that Lebanese friends, while condemning the actions of the Arab suicide bombers, appeared to be in sympathy with the Palestinian cause. They merely said I did not understand, but American policymakers tolerated Jewish injustices toward the Palestinians as well as Saudi corruption because of oil. I replied that I couldn't see what could be done with the first since the British had given the land to the Israelis after the war and surely there must have been some kind of sympathy for people who wanted to go home. As for the second, everyone knew about Ngo Dinh Diem and the Shah and there was Ferdinand himself, wasn't there? Surely one of the considerations must have been the fear of fundamentalists taking over in Saudi Arabia. However, nothing is ever that simple and this was not a judgment call.

Months later their words echoed in my mind as I read a travel book by an English author, William Dalrymple, who quotes an Arab tailor in Acre:

“We live here under an undeclared apartheid. It is just like South Africa. For the Jews there is democracy. They have freedom of speech, they can vote for whichever government they like, can go where they like and talk to whom they like. For us it is different. We are here on sufferance. We are called into police stations if we are heard talking about politics. We are never sure we will get justice in court: if we have a plea against a Jew, then probably we will not. We are not allowed to join the army in case we turn sides. Because of this we cannot get any good jobs; for this you need security clearance. Most of us end up washing dishes or working as manual laborers; if you are lucky you can become a garbage collector.

“You see this shop? It belonged to my father before 1948, yet now I have to pay rent to the town council for it. If I was a Jew I would be given it, free. The taxes for us are very high. Many of the young—they are very angry. If this was their government they would not mind. But they do not want to pay the tax which will kill their brother Arabs. It also means we cannot compete with the Jewish shopkeepers. They do not pay rents for their property so they can sell everything cheaper than us. The Israeli government does nothing for our people.”

Having been pretty much isolated from world politics and therefore abysmally ignorant, I would not like to comment except that the situation with our own Muslim population has also been criticized as being unjust. There are those who say that their own leaders have betrayed them (join the club) and Manila never did invest all that much in developing the south.

Undoubtedly the Americans have a better propaganda machine than the Arabs, but Arab fundamentalist treatment of women doesn't help their cause any or that innocent people keep getting blown up in the process of their search for justice or even revenge. (Actually one could say the same for the Americans and the Japanese and the Russians, and if we go back far enough, the Romans and the Mongols, too.)

The perception appears to be that Osama bin Laden is now a loser and his followers have abandoned him. This does not mean, however, that they have abandoned the cause or that another bloodthirsty leader will not arise. If the problem goes back to the Crusades and hostilities have continued on and off all these many centuries, then Bin Laden is just another failed leader. Audacious perhaps and ruthless, but also lacking in judgment. The terrorist attacks served to unite a nation in a way no political speeches could have done. Retaliation was swift.

Most Americans believe, and probably a good majority of people, that terrorist attacks will continue. Unless the root is attacked we can expect that the first quarter of the 21st century will be violent and bloody. One would have thought we would have learned our lessons since the previous century was apparently one of the most vicious in the history of man. Funny that the philosopher Santayana should have said that those who do not learn from the past are condemned to repeat it since it is becoming abundantly clear that the one lesson we've learned is that man doesn't learn.

All we have to do is look back to our own history to realize that despite all the pretty speeches, our poor have become even more wretched. If any attempt has been made to improve the poorest of our provinces, it has met with little if no success. Where are Masbate, Leyte and Samar in terms of progress despite all the pork that must have come the way of their representatives? Where do most of the dispossessed in the urban areas come from, if not from the south?

We saw the potential for violence last May 1 that lies latent among the marginalized in our society that could easily be manipulated by ruthless elements again. It cannot be denied that there is too vast a difference between the poor and the rich in our country. Now the question is, can we move fast enough to breach it? If we go by the past, there is a greater chance of the crisis in the Middle East being resolved than the rich giving up their advantages willingly.

Sixteenth of December

YOUNGBLOOD

Bob Ong

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

AFTER FAILING to follow tradition for seven consecutive years, I thought I should attend the Simbang Gabi last Christmas. But the night before the first of nine early morning Masses on Dec. 16, I didn't bother to set the alarm clock. I figured that if I needed the alarm to wake me up, I would be too sleepy to get up and go to Mass. At best, the ringing would only interrupt my dreams. That night I just closed my tired eyes with the resolution to attend the Mass.

The probability was perhaps one in a million, but wonders of wonders, I did wake up at the right time! Actually, it was more like 30 minutes past the right time, but what the heck, that was close enough for me.

I felt weird even as I began to change clothes. For one thing, I never really like attending those early morning rites. To me, they're like a campout for dysfunctional youth more than anything else. There's something very annoying about people swarming into church at 4 a.m. Maybe because you know they have ignored the church for 11 months and they will do the same thing after the Christmas season. And you know this because you are one of them.

Anyhow, I marched sleepily to church, but I was stopped 10 meters from the gates by the overflow crowd.

Man, that was some crowd! It was so noisy that you couldn't even hear yourself. Worse, there were no loudspeakers anywhere nearby that would allow the people outside the church to follow what was going on at the altar. Perhaps the church was low on funds or those who were in charge of the preparations figured that the parishioners who arrived late didn't deserve to hear the good news at all.

A person behind me blamed himself for his predicament, saying he should have gotten out of bed at 2 a.m. Left without a choice, I decided to just grin and bear it. The people nearest me were also quiet.

After a short while, I thought I heard a group of teenagers saying, “Peace.” I thought it was already that part of the Mass where people are supposed to say to each other, “Peace be with you!” even if they don't mean it.

I extended the same wish or greeting to the man on my right and another man on my left, but I didn't get any response from them. Before I could greet a third guy, I heard the same group of teenagers saying, “Yo! Peace, man!”

Darn! Did I look like a fool! Or did I? But then how was I supposed to know if it was already time to say, “Peace be with you,” when I could barely hear the priest, and my neighbors were just as clueless as I was? The priest could be reading “Jack and the Beanstalk” without us noticing it.

Then came Communion, and many people who were not supposed to receive the host, following the rules of the church, lined up to receive it. I took my place in the queue so that I could worm my way inside the church. It was quite interesting to hear boys talking about girls and girls talking about boys, but personally I couldn't find anything sexy in yawning members of the opposite sex.

As I inched closer to the church, I couldn't help but notice the Christmas lanterns hanging from its doors and dozens of other places. They had the 24-inch trademark of a laundry soap emblazoned on them. They were obviously very ugly advertisements disguised as lanterns.

I was still five meters from the gate to the churchyard when the Mass ended. Bummer. But no, sir, I was not about to go home yet. I decided to stay for the regular service, the first Mass for Sunday, which is the one I usually attend because of its solemnity. Not many juveniles hear Mass at that hour, you see.

In a couple of minutes, the church was already three quarters empty and I was able to get myself a seat. Comfy.

The members of the choir rested and then took their breakfast while I was looking at the four blinking stars at the altar. They looked to me like they had been taken from a beerhouse signboard somewhere in Avenida Rizal. But just when I thought I was doing a great job entertaining myself, a woman from the choir announced to the small congregation that since there was a Simbang Gabi earlier, the regular 5:30 Mass had been canceled, and the next Mass would be celebrated an hour later.

That was my signal to leave the church. I felt very disappointed that after having interrupted my sleep and bearing with a noisy crowd and the morning breath of the crowd, I didn't get to hear the Gospel.

I know it's too late (or is it to early?) for this prayer, but I have to say it now:

Dear Santa, if you're reading this, I want you to know that all I want for Christmas is Christmas. If I can have it without the Yuletide greetings of a detergent bar, cool! If I can attend Mass which people hear for the right reason, it would be so much better. And if you can take away those funny-looking Christmas lights away with you and never come back, I promise to be a good boy always.

Bob Ong, 27, is only grumpy when his sleep is interrupted. He writes for a living.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?

Estafa vs Annabelle Rama

ANNABELLE Rama, wife of actor Eddie Gutierrez and mother of actress Ruffa Gutierrez, was meted out a maximum jail term of 25 years for issuing five bouncing checks worth P370,000 to businesswoman Ligaya Santos. Branch 33 Judge Rodolfo Palattao of the Manila Regional Trial Court promulgated the 11-page decision on May 25, 1995.

Rama and Santos used to be friends who frequented the casinos in Manila during the early 1990s. Rama owed Santos some money, for which she issued in May 1993 five post-dated United Coconut Planters Bank checks as payment.

When Santos tried to encash the checks, she was told the account had been closed. She sued Rama, who pleaded not guilty during her arraignment on Nov. 19, 1993.

Rama then issued five new checks and Santos agreed not to pursue the case. Santos was able to encash four of the checks, but when the fifth was returned for insufficiency of funds she decided to revive the cases she had earlier filed, charging Rama with estafa and five counts of violations of Batas Pambansa Bilang 129 or the Bouncing Checks Law.

When the prosecution rested its case, Rama filed a demurrer to the prosecution's evidence. A demurrer, if granted, leads to the dismissal of the cases. But her petition was denied in September 1994.

Rama moved for reconsideration but this was also denied. The court instead ordered her to present evidence, but she and her counsel did not appear at the hearing on Oct. 25, 1994. The court then considered the cases submitted for decision without her evidence.

The promulgation was set on Dec. 6, 1994 but the Court of Appeals stopped the lower court on Rama's motion. She maintained that the demurrer should not have been denied since Santos had filed an affidavit of desistance in February and that the evidence didn't establish her guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

On April 10, 1995, the Court of Appeals said there was no merit in Rama's petition. It noted that Santos had clarified that her affidavit of desistance covered only the civil liabilities arising from the cases.

On May 25, Palattao convicted the former actress. Rama was not present at the promulgation and said she was sick.

Rama then filed a motion for reconsideration with petition for bail. Both were denied. The court ordered government doctors to determine if Rama was indeed unfit to serve her prison term.

Rama then asked the Court of Appeals to issue a restraining order. On June 15, the Court of Appeals' Fifth Division granted her request.

The prosecution questioned the Court of Appeals' order before the Supreme Court.

On June 19, 1995, Rama charged Palattao before the Office of the Ombudsman with violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. The next day Palattao was cited as one of the five Most Outstanding RTC Judges in Manila.

Case status: The Supreme Court is still studying the records of the case. Palattao is now a justice in the Sandiganbayan.

Armin P. Adina, PDI Research Department

Ending years of corruption and waste in rice trading

HOUSE Bill 3339 intends to remedy decades of corruption and fiscal waste that have plagued the operations of the National Food Authority from the very start. The NFA Employees Association together with pseudo-farmers' organizations that published a manifesto full of falsehoods are desperate to hold on to the highly profitable and corrupt collusion they have established with the cartel of rice traders that has bled dry government coffers and impoverished our small farmers.

Anybody who knows basic economic trade policy knows that quantitative restrictions only breed graft and corruption and enrich immensely those who grant the import permits and those who receive these import licenses. Easily between P5 billion and P6 billion a year is earned by these importers who collude with corrupt NFA officials in these rice imports which often come during harvest season. The rice cartel, again in collusion with some corrupt NFA employees are able to squeeze the small rice farmer out of whatever fair price he is entitled to.

Figures don't lie and they show how little the NFA's buying operations have benefited the rice farmers and how much the government has lost both in terms of potential tariff revenues and actual subsidies to the highly corrupt and inefficient NFA operations. Total losses to the economy are estimated at P30 billion a year or one percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), and most of these losses are incurred by Filipino consumers and farmers because of this graft-ridden policy of import permits and quantitative restrictions administered by the NFA.

Given the huge sums involved, it is easy to understand why some groups among the NFA employees and their pseudo-farmers' organizations are desperately resorting to lies and demagoguery to preserve this graft-prone policy of quantitative restrictions on rice imports. *Pati ba naman ang golden kuhol ibibintang nila sa ating mga kilala at respetadong economista at pati ang* ADB *na malaki na ang tinulong sa ating bayan idadamay pa nila!*

We are also mandated by the World Trade Organization agreement to remove these anti-consumer and economically wasteful quantitative restrictions on agricultural products by 2004. Many countries have done so even earlier because they know it's good for their people. We may be the only country left in the world that still practices this corrupt and antiquated policy of import licensing.

Let us do what is good for our country and our people, and for our farmers and consumers as well. If we want 100-percent rice self-sufficiency, we will have to raise the domestic price of rice to P30 a kilo. Do we want that? Food security means the ability to buy rice anytime we need it and anywhere we want to. This does not necessarily mean we grow all the rice we consume. Singapore and Hong Kong are well-fed and food secure and yet they do not produce a single grain of rice. It is but natural for farmers who are not efficient in producing rice to shift to other crops and activities from which they will earn more. That is why this government is encouraging the planting of high value crops. Why do some groups want to stop that? So they can continue to victimize our rice farmers and consumers?

We must learn to distinguish truth from lies, honest reformers from groups that pretend to be pro-farmer and yet only want to continue a corrupt practice from which they benefit immensely. Let us support HB 3339 and put an end to the huge social and economic waste created by the present policy of giving rice import permits to favored groups.

We also urge the agriculture secretary to stop coddling these pseudo-farmers' groups which are being agitated by some misguided and deceitful elements in the NFA and support the policy our President herself has pronounced.

Lastly, it is very surprising why the policy statement of the President during her State of the Nation Address—for the farmers to import rice—is now being contested and opposed by government agencies which are supposed to implement her pronouncements.—**REP. BENJAMIN A. CRUZ, party list, Butil (Luzon Farmers Party), Rm. 607 N, Batasang Pambansa, Constitution Hills, Quezon City**

LETTERS

An original interpretation of 'Ramayana'

LIGAYA Fernando-Amilbangsa's letter (PDI, 12/6/01), amusing and ludicrous as it is, seems to be motivated by ignorance, or jealousy, or bile, or all of the above.

I am the director for Kinding Sindaw's "Rajah Mangandiri," a piece that was created for the stage of La Mama Annex Theater, New York City. It was inspired by the Maranao version of the Indian epic "The Ramayana" and showcased the authentic secular and court dances of the Maranao people as passed on by Potri Ranka Manis, the *kulintang* music and martial arts. The title "Rajah Mangandiri" was chosen appropriately as the translation of King Rama. I and all the others in the cast had never even heard of Peta's "The Journey of Rajah Mangandiri" before the creation and premiere of Kinding Sindaw's "Rajah Mangandiri" in December 2000. Ours was an original and fresh interpretation of this millennium-old story.

The last line of her letter says that we Filipino-Americans have been deceived. On the contrary we Fililpino-Americans are not stupid. Regrettably, Amilbangsa's letter is an example of someone who is at the very least writing out of ignorance of the facts and, at the worst, perpetuating a stereotype of Filipinos trying to bring down another Filipino.—**WAYLAND QUINTERO, director for "Rajah Mangandiri," resident artist of La Mama E.T.C., New York City**

A pleasant encounter with a traffic aide

I HAVE been based overseas since 1991 and for most of that time, I dreaded coming back home because of the chaos in the streets, the street kids, the rubbish and the paranoia that someone will snatch my necklace or pick my pocket. A cab driver even warned me not to wear my baseball cap while waiting for public transport because someone might take a fancy to it and yank it off my head. If it were not for my incredible family and friends, I would have spent the holidays somewhere else. In short, I have been quite pessimistic about the situation in the Philippines.

However on my last day in the Philippines, Jan. 2, 2002, something happened that softened my negative outlook. I asked my sister's family driver to drive me to SM Fairview for some last-minute shopping. At around 9:30 a.m., on Regalado Street in Diliman, we were stopped by MMDA officer Ronaldo Omega. He said we were violating the traffic color-coding.

This was something foreign to me. My sister's driver was apologetic, both to me and the traffic aide. He handed over his license, which had P1,000 in it its jacket.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority officer reminded him that money should be kept in the wallet and not with his license. He warned the driver that he could be charged with bribery.

Throughout the whole process, the officer was polite yet firm. He told the driver how much fine he would have to pay as well as the exact location and time when he could pick up his license. He also advised the driver not to worry about being stopped again since he had already been issued a ticket.

I was amazed at the officer's honesty and professionalism. It reminded me that there are public servants who value integrity. I hope there are many more Ronaldo Omegas out there.

Later at the airport as I was paying for my travel tax, I was informed that I was exempted because I am a resident of another country. However, I had to pay P5 per page of photocopying and a P100 processing fee. Though this sounded ridiculous, I felt better since it was cheaper than paying P1,620. However, I made sure I kept an eye on my passport while four people "processed" it. Last year, while being "processed," they gave me the wrong passport and I only discovered the mistake when I reached the immigration counter.

When I got my passport back, I sighed with relief.

At the immigration area, the officer interviewing me was busy talking to a colleague at the same time. I gave him my passport and boarding pass. He continued talking to his colleague about another case for about five minutes.

Then he asked me for my boarding pass saying he didn't have it. It turned out that he had accidentally given my boarding pass to another person. He had to run after the woman who had my pass.

Despite all of this, I will surely be back next year—making sure I know what color-coding is and keeping an eye on my passport as well as on my boarding pass.—**DR. TONY FERNANDO, University of Auckland, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences**

Is PCSO buying costly and expired medicines?

PLEASE consider this information which I learned during my over four-year term at the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) which is very alarming to our health care program especially for the poor and needy among us.

When I took over the PCSO in January 1994, I noticed that the agency was buying medicines from non-accredited pharmaceutical companies which were producing unreliable products which did not cure but instead harmed those who took them.

What I did was to call all the pharmaceutical companies in the country to a meeting in my office. Out of 35 companies that attended, only 17 were legitimate and reliable. The rest were what we may call fly-by-night operations.

I banned all the questionable pharmaceutical companies from dealing with the PCSO, especially after I found out that they were importing expired medicines from a neighboring country and selling them at lower prices by repackaging them. These companies were the ones that indulged and practiced the "*lagay* system," giving kickbacks of as high as 40 percent.

The 17 reliable and legitimate pharmaceutical companies were accredited by the PCSO and I instructed those in charge of purchasing of medicines for the sick and the poor, including the bidding committee or PBAC of the PCSO, to deal only with these companies.

I made the 17 pharmaceutical companies submit lists of their products at the lowest prices they could give to the PCSO, without *lagay*, without commission to anyone. From those lists, the PCSO clinic could immediately get the medicines needed, safely and honestly.

The bidding through the PBAC is not corruption-free. The listing was safer at *naglabanan sila sa pababaan ng presyo.*

When Cecilia Muñoz-Palma took over the PCSO chairmanship during the Estrada administration in 1998, the set-up was abolished by her board. The PCSO purchased medicines worth hundreds of millions of pesos from only two pharmaceutical companies that were not even accredited by the Department of Health. Many of the medicines remained in the PCSO stockrooms, expired and useless.

If this practice continues, I pity the Filipino people. We will never be able to alleviate poverty which we are all trying hard to do. Health care is so vital and important, for how can our nation progress and move ahead with a sick and unhealthy population?

I heard Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit say on TV that drug companies only add 15 percent to the actual cost of medicines. I doubt it, for if these drug companies can accommodate a 20-percent discount for senior citizens, they must be making a comfortable 30 to 40-percent markup.

Comparing the prices of medicines abroad, it is obvious that Philippine prices are inexplicably higher.

Something must be done by the government immediately before it is too late.—**MANUEL L. MORATO, Doña Consuelo Bldg., 192-194 Tomas B. Morato Ave., Quezon City**

Congress should pass absentee voting

THANK your for your editorial on absentee voting. It was heartwarming to know that at least someone still remembers us.

I've been slaving away in the United States for the past seven years now and though the attraction of the United States is almost irresistible, I still want to go home.

Please send this message to the politicians. They should show their true colors now and support our cause. We are pushing for absentee voting to be made into a law.

I support my family in the Philippines and the people who work for me. I believe I can influence quite a number of votes in my hometown.

More power to the INQUIRER.—**NATHANIEL GALAPON, Rzmtazz@aol.com**

Former wrestler could run for US president

FEATURE

Shawn Regan

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—His popularity may be down, he feuds endlessly with the media, and his bluster embarrasses some of his fellow Minnesotans, but who can discount the possibility of a US President Jesse Ventura?

Doubtful, to be sure. But the former Navy SEAL, professional wrestler, bit-part actor and now the loud, feather boa-wearing governor of Minnesota has surprised before—most shockingly in November 1998 when the virtual political neophyte beat two major party stalwarts to take the top job of the nation's 21st-largest state.

Ventura, who was born James Janos 50 years ago, said he has toyed with the idea of running for president, but in the meantime he will not even tip his hand as to whether he will seek a second term as governor.

No other candidate on the US political scene appears to have tapped into the disaffected nonvoters who were drawn to the political process by Ventura's brand of charisma and helped catapult him into the public eye. "He's come in and told it like it is and challenged the establishment," said Joe Garrett, a computer consultant in Minneapolis. "He's got everybody talking about things in a way that they weren't before he came in. But those good traits can do some damage, like when he spouts off too quick sometimes."

The damage is apparent in popularity polls. After winning office in the three-way race as a Reform Party candidate with just 37 percent of the vote, a month later the hulking, shaven-headed Ventura, who gave himself the wrestling nickname "The Body," scored a 69-percent approval rating. Just a year later, only 43 percent rated his performance as governor good to excellent. Recent polls indicated 51 percent rated him positively.

Political analysts blamed Ventura's fall from grace primarily on the downturn in the US economy that has forced him to start slashing spending and stop passing out tax-rebate checks once dubbed "Jesse checks." But interviews with random voters revealed that Ventura's personality quirks and various unsolved challenges, such as the potential demise of the 41-year-old Minnesota Twins baseball franchise, have hurt his standing.

"At first, I was happy with my decision to vote for him, but I'm starting to think he's self-centered and doesn't think very much about what Minnesotans need and want," said Kathy, who runs a retail website and declined to give her last name. "I respect him for speaking his mind. But he'll get off on these tangents about the media or about how he was going to be the next target after (the) Sept. 11th (attacks). The world doesn't revolve around you, Jesse."

Added University of Minnesota political scientist Larry Jacobs: "He's extremely thin-skinned, we're talking microbe-thick, so he's had these unfortunate eruptions and gotten into a...fight with the media."

Being governor might keep most people very busy, but Ventura has managed to author two tell-all books in which he confessed to a past of smoking marijuana and frequenting prostitutes. He gave a Playboy magazine interview in which he called religion a sham for the weak-minded and gun-control advocates ignorant, and he worked weekends as a television announcer for the now-defunct XFL football league, run by his former professional wrestling employer, to supplement his $120,000 salary as governor.

Ventura branded reporters covering him "jackals" and engaged in childish feuds with the local media, including a quickly rescinded plan to require huge press passes and a classic Ventura meltdown after being criticized for barring local coverage of his recent visit to New York City. Recently he has sought to make peace with reporters, but an aide said he was too busy to do an interview for this story.

Ventura also lambasted several state legislators with whom he must work on eliminating a $1.9-billion deficit in the state's $28-billion two-year budget and avoid embarrassments like the two-week walkout by state workers.

"People who he has been very critical of—dumping on us—now he needs us," said Steve Sviggum, the leading Republican state legislator. "He called us everything from self-serving to being out of touch with the people, and he actually called us names."

Sviggum said he likes Ventura personally, and gives him high marks for delegating authority to well-selected aides and for pushing through tax cuts and school funding reform, but he said Ventura's myriad outside interests and appearances on talk shows have damaged the "honor and integrity" of the office.

"Sometimes he behaves so poorly in public it's embarrassing," said Lori Fletcher, a business analyst who voted for Ventura but said she would not do so again.

Chris Maddox, an investment advisor, said he fears Ventura might come "unstuck" from the criticism. "He doesn't have the answers (to the budget problems). He gets flustered and responds by attacking. With the economy taking a downturn, he's not having as much fun."

Aides said Ventura is not tired of the job leading the state of 4.9 million residents, and is vigorously pursuing budget fixes and public transit projects.

Tim Penny, a former Democratic US congressman who advises the governor, said Ventura's independence is his strength. "Most voters are in the middle of the political spectrum and that's where the governor stands," Penny said. "He's able to say things that neither Democrats nor Republicans can say, because they're worried about offending interest groups."

Ventura was the first Reform Party candidate elected to statewide office, then left the party created by billionaire presidential hopeful Ross Perot to start his own amorphous party. He eschews fundraising, allowing him to delay announcing his reelection plans until he has to.

Ventura would no doubt run under his own party banner, the Independence Party, because he said he wants nothing to do with the two major political parties.

Ventura's aspirations for the White House are likely made in jest, but most analysts believe he can win another term as governor in a three-way race against lesser-known party nominees. Democratic US Sen. Paul Wellstone, once a wrestler himself, has tangled with Ventura but apparently will not be an opponent.

Jacobs described Ventura as a "Jekyll and Hyde" politician, adopting his outrageous persona by night while donning a business suit by day to fit his fiscally conservative, socially liberal philosophy.

But Ventura's sensitivity to criticism delayed his tackling the budget crisis faced by nearly all his fellow governors, but he remains a political force to be reckoned with, Jacobs said.

"This guy is not a joke, he's a very formidable politician. He has a remarkable intuitive understanding of voters, he has the best mouth in the game, and he can pull forth words that can crystallize sometimes complex, sometimes simple issues," Jacobs said. ***Reuters***

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The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

Afghan forces surround suspected Omar hideout

KABUL/WASHINGTON—Afghan fighters, backed by US ground forces, staked out a village in southern Afghanistan on Friday with officials in the area saying shadowy Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar may be hiding there.

With the United States highlighting terror suspects as the focus of the Afghan war it launched on Oct. 7, an official in the former Taliban stronghold of Kandahar said US forces were making house-to-house searches in the area of the village.

"We would know within half an hour if he is captured," Nasratullah, secretary to Kandahar intelligence chief Haji Gullalai, said. Mullah Omar, who imposed his own strict vision of Islam on Afghanistan, sheltered Saudi-born Osama bin Laden in the face of US demands he be handed over for masterminding the Sept. 11 suicide hijackings that killed nearly 3,300 in the United States.

Afghan Minister for Reconstruction Amin Farhang told German television on Thursday he had heard Omar had been arrested.

The Pentagon, which is orchestrating the hunt for Bin Laden, said it had nothing to support the report. "We have nothing on that at all," spokesperson Victoria Clark said.

US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told a Pentagon briefing on Thursday the focus of the Afghan war was now on pursuing those the Taliban harbored.

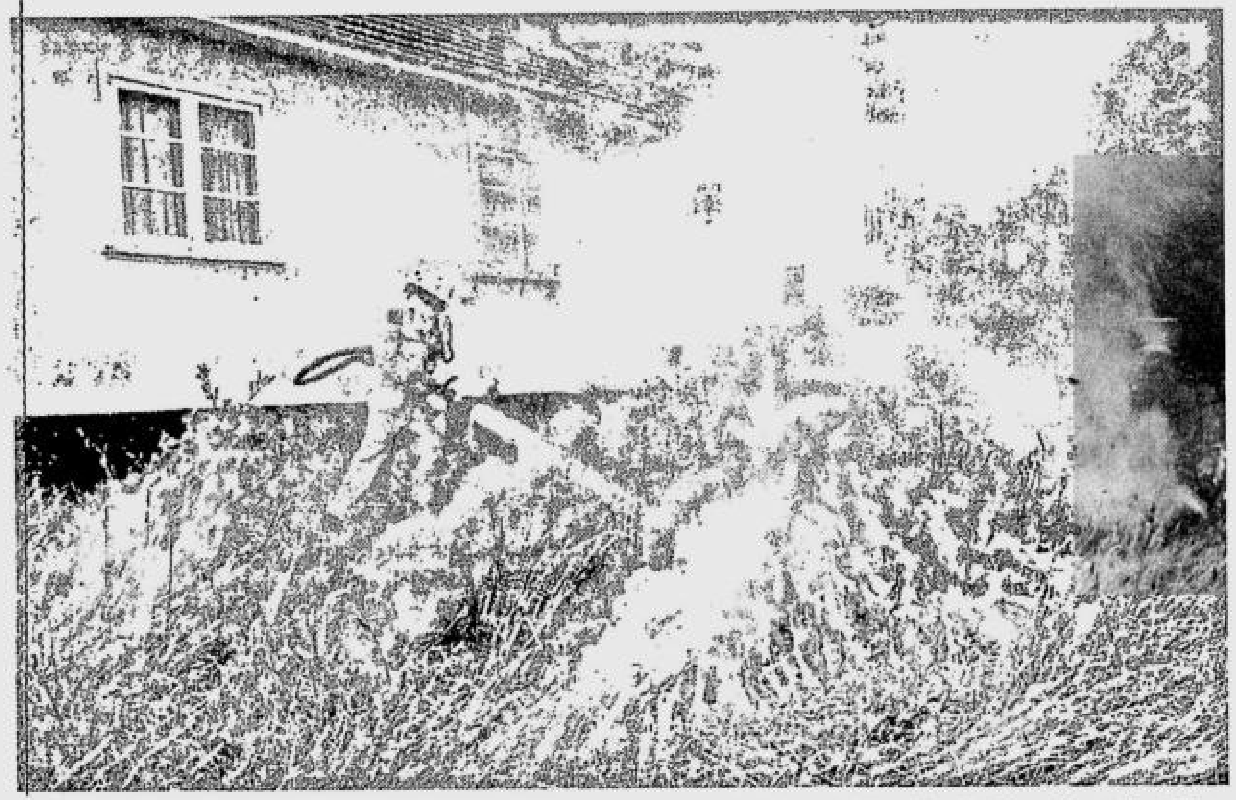
"The Taliban rule in Afghanistan has ended," he said as US officials announced an air strike on a suspected leadership compound near the border with Pakistan.

"That is a good thing. It's a good thing for the people of Afghanistan, but it's also a good thing for the people of the world that that country is no longer harboring terrorists. The real task is seeing that they are pursued."

Washington wants Mullah Omar for providing a safe haven for Bin Laden and his al-Qaida network from which to carry out operations against US and other targets.

Afghan intelligence officials say the reclusive cleric who lost an eye fighting the 1979-89 Soviet occupation is holed up with 1,000 fighters in the mountains around Baghran in Helmand province, 160 km northwest of Kandahar. *Reuters*

FORMER Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, was taken from his home in Islamabad on Thursday for questioning by Pakistan officials, an aide said. REUTERS



A FIREFIGHTER douses the grass around a house during a controlled burn in Woodford in Blue Mountains 70 km from Sydney Jan. 4 as Australia's fire crisis entered its 12th harrowing day. AP

Hot front may worsen Australia's bush fires

SYDNEY—Exhausted Australian firefighters battled bushfires threatening beach and mountain towns on Friday as officials predicted a return of the extreme hot, dry summer weather that sparked the fire crisis on Christmas Day.

"The news continues to be bad about the weather," New South Wales state premier Bob Carr told reporters on Friday.

"The current conditions will continue. On Sunday they will get bad, same on Monday. There will be a dangerous combination of high temperatures, winds and low humidity."

Some 10,000 firefighters are trying to contain more than 100 fires, many lit by arsonists, on fronts totaling 2,000 km along Australia's east coast.

The fires, the worst since a 16-day-old 1994 crisis when four people died, have destroyed 160 homes and burned an area twice the size of greater London. So far, there have been no deaths in this year.

Two massive blazes posed the greatest threat—one burning along the Blue Mountains west of Australia's biggest city, Sydney, and another on the New South Wales state's south coast.

With lower temperatures and gentler winds on Friday, firefighters managed to keep the fires at bay, but fire official John Winter said the moderate conditions were not a great help.

"The moderate conditions will play havoc with fire strategy because the fires are so erratic now," Winter said, predicting a "scary" day for Blue Mountains residents as the fire licked at their small townships. *Reuters*

Aid drive averted Afghan famine

WASHINGTON—A huge international aid drive coinciding with the US military operation in Afghanistan headed off a major famine, a top US aid official said Thursday.

"It appears from the data we've collected and the reporting we're getting from the field that we have averted widespread famine in Afghanistan, and this is a major, I think, accomplishment," said Andrew Natsios, top administrator for the US Agency for International Development.

"Congratulations go to the international organizations, such as the World Food Program, that did the primary food distribution into the country, and then to the NGOs, that did the distribution from the interior warehouses to the remote villages and to the cities."

Natsios also congratulated Afghan staff who remained in Afghanistan, often while foreign staff had left the country due to security fears over the US war on the Taliban and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network launched after Sept. 11 terror strikes on the United States.

"We think that is a very hopeful sign that the people who, in fact, saved Afghanistan—even though we provided the assistance—were the Afghan people themselves, the people who worked for the NGOs for the last 20 years," Natsios said.

Natsios said that around 200,000 tons of food aid was delivered by the UN World Food Program during the last three months of 2001—two thirds of which was provided by the United States. *AFP*

AN URGENT APPEAL TO STOP THE WATER RATE INCREASE

We strongly condemn the increase in water rates granted by the **Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System** to **Maynilad Water Services, Inc.** and **Manila Water Company, Inc.**.

The additional cost of water ensures a bountiful New Year to the owners of the water utilities but deprives the Filipino family of three full meals or three kilos of rice, the ordinary vendor of one full day of income, and two days of food for the poorest of the poor.

Yet the water companies do not guarantee improved and expanded services. Maynilad even intends to scale down its performance targets and service oblivations. In other words, **DAGDAG PRESYO, BAWAS SERBISYO**.

Had government and the water companies adhered strictly to the original Concession Agreements, there would have been no increase. The amended agreement allows irresponsible water companies to recoup their normal losses at the expense of consumers, workers, and their families.

If MWSS protects the interests of water companies, who will then protect the interests of workers and consumers? Why should the heart of MWSS bleed for the giant companies but not for small workers and consumers still reeling from the aftershocks of successive political and economic crises?

We call on President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to revamp the MWSS Board of Trustees. They have lost the trust and confidence of consumers and workers.

We appeal to the President to revoke the amendments to the original Concession Agreements. We appeal that a full-options policy review be ordered instead. Means of democratizing the ownership of water companies should be studied and considered. If captive consumers have to pay for ordinary business mistakes, their contributions might as well be equitized. This way, water companies can be held accountable to consumers who should be their owners.

We call on Congress to amend legislation to avoid a regulatory capture that this case brazenly involved.

MWSS can still salvage whatever is left of its credibility. We demand that it suspends the water rate increase!

ITIGIL ANG WATER RATE INCREASE!

ASIAN LABOR NETWORK ON INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (ALNI/Philippine Chapter)

Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
Alliance of Free Workers
Trade Union of the Philippines and Allied Services
Informal Sector Coalition of the Philippines
Federation of Free Workers
National Federation of Labor Unions
Institute of Public Policy
Freedom from Debt Coalition
Alliance of Progressive Labor
Earthsavers Movement - Philippines
Workers' Fund

NGO Forum on the Asian Development Bank

Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives

India, Pakistan unlikely to talk at summit

KATMANDU—Indian and Pakistani leaders will attend a regional summit on Friday as their armies stare one another down in a confrontation causing concern around the world, but they are unlikely to use the gathering to talk peace.

Neither of the nuclear rivals held out much hope that Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf would hold one-on-one talks on the sidelines of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) conference in the Nepali capital.

The SAARC summit itself had been repeatedly postponed because of tensions between the two states, whose leaders have not met since a failed summit in July.

"I'm not here to conduct India-Pakistan relations," Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh told a news conference. "We have no request or information that they want to meet us."

However, Musharraf said during a visit to Beijing before leaving for Nepal on Friday that he was willing to solve the dispute through talks—even as the two opposing armies traded more gunfire in Kashmir overnight.

The prospect of a war which would destabilize the region and undermine the hunt for the remnants of the Taliban and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida has alarmed foreign leaders.

US President George Bush is considering dispatching a senior official to the region to press for talks between India and Pakistan, US officials and diplomatic sources said in Washington on Thursday.

A senior US official said the administration was close to a decision, adding it expected Musharraf to take further steps to crack down on anti-Indian militants in his country.

On the eve of the conference, Singh released a list of requests that New Delhi has made over the past decade to Pakistan to hand over those charged with carrying out acts of terror in the country.

Among them were those India says were behind an attack on India's parliament that killed 14, including the five assailants, last month.

Musharraf said root causes of terrorism must be addressed, and that the seven-nation SAARC must find a way to deal with contentious issues between member countries.

"In our opinion talking to each other about contentious issues is much better than refusing to discuss them," Musharraf said in a written answer to Nepal's state-run Rashtriya Samachar Samiti news agency that was released to reporters.

Islamabad has long demanded implementation of a 1948 United Nations resolution seeking a plebiscite to determine the future of Kashmir, the divided Himalayan region over which India and Pakistan have twice gone to war.

New Delhi considers all of Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir an integral part of India and blames Pakistan for fomenting a 12-year-old revolt there.

It has accused two Pakistan-based guerrilla groups and Islamabad's intelligence agency of involvement in the parliament attack, which it said was meant to wipe out India's entire political leadership. Islamabad denies involvement and has asked New Delhi for evidence. *Reuters*

PAKISTANI soldiers pray near an anti-aircraft gun near Sukkur, 480 km north of Karachi Jan. 3. Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee will attend a summit of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in Nepal on Friday. The summit is overshadowed by the threat of war between nuclear-capable India and Pakistan. REUTERS

Fujimori appointed lecturer

TOKYO—Former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, wanted in Peru on charges of embezzlement and murder, has been appointed guest lecturer at a Tokyo university and will hold his first seminar on Jan. 10, news reports said Friday.

Fujimori's first lecture at Takushoku University—titled "A Reflection on Terrorism"—will be held free to the public, the nationally circulated Yomiuri newspaper reported, citing university officials.

The 90-minute talk—to be delivered in Spanish with Japanese interpretation—will focus on the Dec. 1996 hostage-taking at the Japanese ambassador's residence in Peru, the paper said. It added that the university would call on Fujimori periodically to discuss his experiences as president of the South American country.

The financial daily Nihon Keizai newspaper carried a similar report. Takushoku University was closed for the New Year holidays and officials were unavailable for comment, said a guard who answered the phone Friday.

The lecture would be a rare public appearance for Fujimori, who fled to Tokyo in November 2000 and is wanted in Peru for allegedly sanctioning two massacres by a paramilitary death squad in the early 1990s.

He also faces charges of dereliction of duty, abandonment of office and embezzlement. Fujimori has denied criminal wrongdoing.

Fujimori has settled down in his parents' native Japan, where he has been granted citizenship and is safe from extradition to Peru. Japanese law prohibits the extradition of its citizens to face trial for crimes committed in other countries.

As president, Fujimori was praised in Japan for his handling of the 1996 hostage standoff, when leftist rebels took some 400 people captive. Hundreds of hostages were released during negotiations, while the remainder were freed in a military raid. *AP*

Israeli tanks, troops raid Palestinian village

NABLUS, West Bank—Israeli forces raided a Palestinian village in the West Bank on Friday hours before Washington's top Middle East troubleshooter was to meet Israeli and Palestinian leaders in a push to end 15 months of bloodshed.

"Within the framework of the Army's fight against terrorism, Israeli military forces are carrying out activity in the village of Tel, which is located in territory under full Palestinian control," an Israeli military spokesperson said.

Tel Mayor Adnan Sefi said between 15 and 20 Israeli armored vehicles including tanks rumbled into the village, near the Palestinian city of Nablus, in a dawn incursion. There was no immediate report of fighting.

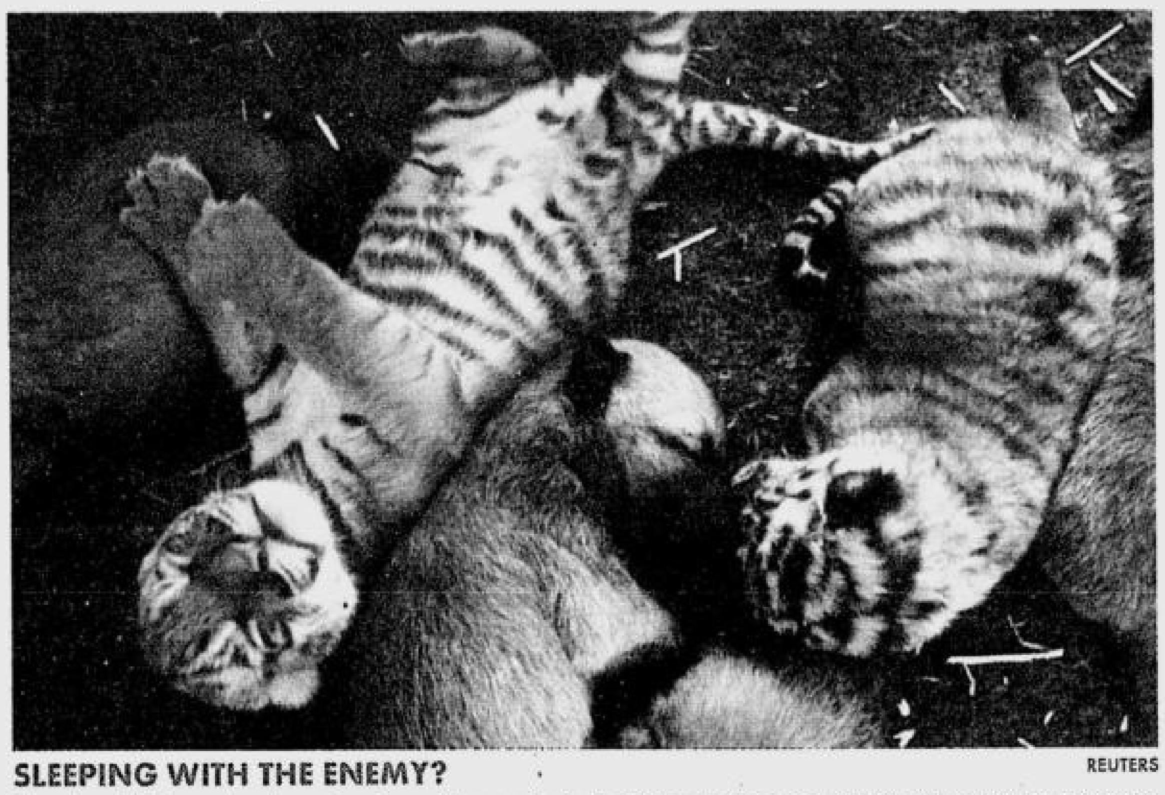
An Israeli radio military affairs correspondent said the force was "pursuing terrorists."

US envoy Anthony Zinni was to meet Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and other top officials at the Israeli leader's farm in southern Israel before travelling to the West Bank city of Ramallah for talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

Sharon was widely expected to repeat his key condition for implementing a US-backed truce-for-talks plan—seven days without Palestinian attacks on Israelis.

Palestinians say the demand means a lone gunman could sabotage efforts to stop attacks on Israelis.

A big drop in violence since Arafat, under US pressure, called for a cessation of such attacks has kindled hopes that Zinni will have more luck than on his last visit. *Reuters*



REUTERS

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY?

Five day-old tiger cubs sleep together with puppies in the Belgrade Zoo Jan. 3. With temperatures dropping far below zero degrees Celsius, the Zoo decided to move the two tiger cubs from their mother in an outdoor cage into a smaller indoor space where they were adopted by the police dog.

Man freed after 18 years on Florida jail death row

MIAMI—After nearly 18 years on Florida's death row, a man held in the 1983 murder of a beauty-school owner was freed and smiling on Thursday after his conviction was overturned because prosecutors withheld critical evidence in his original trial and officials decided not to retry him.

Juan Roberto Melendez, who was convicted in 1984 of the murder of Delbert Baker in Polk County, Florida, walked out of the Union Correctional Institution in Raiford, Florida, on Thursday night, his attorney Martin McClain said.

"There was a bright smile on his face, just sort of a glow. He was very happy," McClain said.

The attorney also said he was pleased for his client.

"However, that happiness is mixed with the sense that here a person has spent 17 years and 10 months incarcerated on death row for a crime he didn't commit," said McClain.

Baker was shot in the head after closing his cosmetology school in the central Florida town of Auburndale on Sept. 13, 1983. Some of his jewelry was missing.

Melendez, now 50, was convicted on the strength of an informant who said Melendez had confessed to him that he committed the killing while the two were using cocaine together. But police had no physical evidence linking Melendez to the crime, McClain said.

His conviction stood through appeals all the way to the Florida Supreme Court but the case was reopened in 2000 when a transcript emerged of another man, Vernon James, confessing to the crime under questioning by state investigators. James is now dead.

Last month, Florida Circuit Court Judge Barbara Fleischer overturned Melendez's death sentence on the grounds that prosecutors withheld critical evidence during trial and failed to present physical evidence implicating him, defense attorneys said. *Reuters*

Fierce fighting rages on in southern Chechnya

SLEPTSOVSK, Russia—Fierce fighting raged on in southern Chechnya Thursday, where dozens have been killed in five days of battles, according to unconfirmed tolls provided by Russian and Chechen officials.

Chechen rebels who retreated to the hamlet of Tsotsyn-Yurt in a region southeast of Grozny were battling Russian forces who have surrounded the village, Interfax reported, quoting Deputy Security chief Alexander Potapov.

There was also fighting further west in the Shali region, Potapov said, adding that four rebels were killed in those clashes and that there were also losses among federal forces.

"The intensity of the gunfire coming from houses transformed into bunkers is such that it is difficult to identify those who have been killed," Potapov said.

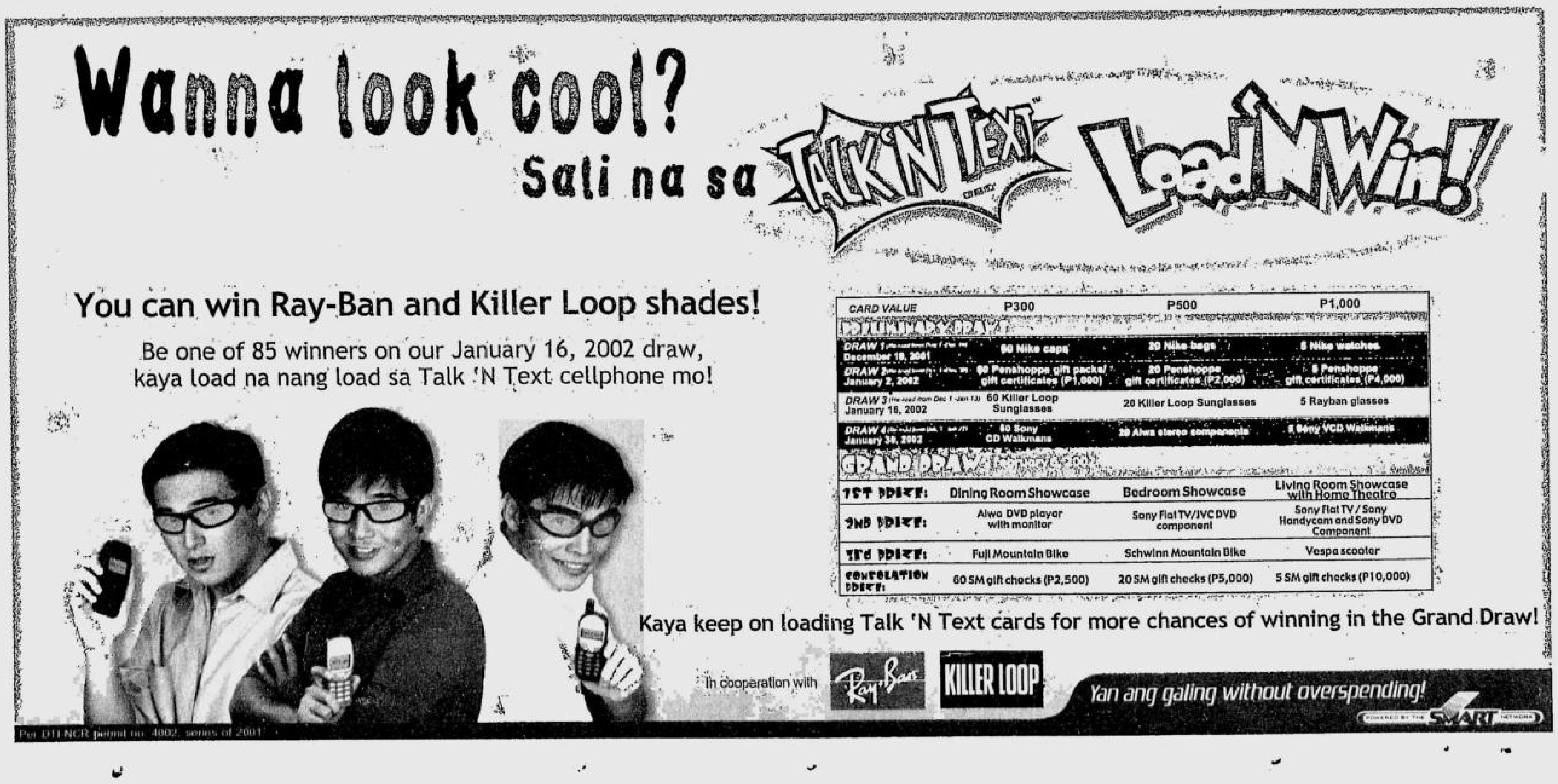
The latest flare-up in Chechnya challenged Kremlin assurances that Russian forces had succeeded in stamping out the separatist rebellion in the republic more than two years after it launched the campaign.

It also underscored Russian President Vladimir Putin's view that the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States had brought new impetus to international efforts to fight terrorism, including in Chechnya.

Both Chechen and Russian sources declared casualties on the enemy side Wednesday.

Eight separatist rebels, including several extremists were killed, according to Russian interior ministry sources in Chechnya quoted by Interfax.

A leader of the surrounded group, Abdul Said Mahomed, called "Abdulla," was among those reported killed by the Russians, the agency reported. *AFP*



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DRAW 3 (To load from Dec 1 - Jan 13) January 16, 2002	60 Killer Loop Sunglasses	20 Killer Loop Sunglasses	5 Rayban glasses
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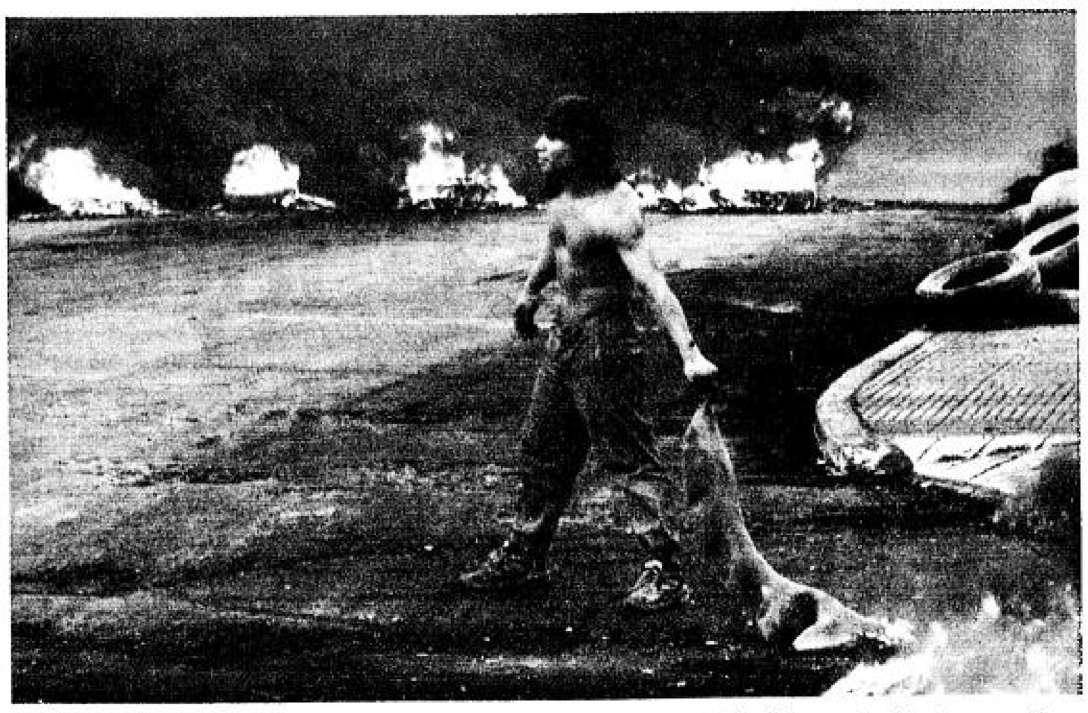

AN ARGENTINE demonstrator stands next to a burning barricade blocking a street in Buenos Aires, Jan. 3. New Peronist President Eduardo Duhalde is plotting a devaluation to try and save the economy from a recession now in its fourth year, in a nation where unemployment affects more than 18 percent of the workforce and where a third of the population lives in poverty. REUTERS

Argentina president forms partial Cabinet

BUENOS AIRES—President Eduardo Duhalde Thursday formed a partial Cabinet that was poised to adopt measures leading to devaluation, and possibly to further protests in recession-struck Argentina.

The new government said its top priority was to ease tension, which already led to violence in recent weeks.

"The philosophy of this plan is to seek to avert a worsening of the social crisis," said Cabinet chief Jorge Capitanich, who announced the government program would be presented on Friday.

Jorge Remes Lenicov, named to lead the key economy ministry, was expected to outline economic policies based on the scrapping of the decade-old 1-1 peg of the peso to the dollar, which once ended hyperinflation but is now blamed for making exports less competitive.

The expected devaluation could infuriate millions of Argentines already affected by austerity measures, and whose protests led to the resignation of two presidents last month.

"Argentina will suffer major changes that are necessary in this time of crisis," said Cordoba provincial Gov. Jose de la Sota.

He said that in a first stage, Argentina would float the dollar on the free market while setting a fixed rate for "commercial operations considered important by the Argentine government."

The government plan was to be presented immediately to Congress, which is dominated by Duhalde's Peronist party.

The Congress overwhelmingly elected Duhalde on Tuesday. The populist president promptly swore in most members of his cabinet two days later, including Remes Lenicov, who served as economy minister in the influential Buenos Aires province when it was governed by Duhalde in the 1990s, and Carlos Ruckauf, named foreign minister.

While Duhalde had said he would form a government of national unity, only two portfolios went to non-Peronists, including the justice ministry to Jorge Vanossi and the production ministry to business leader Jose de Mendiguren.

Sources said the leader of the center-left coalition Frepaso, Juan Pablo Cafiero, would be named assistant chief of staff, while Radical Horacio Juanarena was offered defense ministry.

AFP

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Gloria reiterates call for unity

By Roly Embile
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

SORSOGON CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo reiterated her call for unity and a break from partisan politics among Bicolano leaders after seeing for herself that what affects the region are not only natural calamities but also the ravages of partisan politics.

"Put aside partisan politics and let us be united in bringing progress and prosperity in the Bicol Region," the President said upon arriving in Sta. Magdalena town in Sorsogon from her overnight trip in Masbate province.

The President visited the far-flung towns of Balud, Pio V. Corpus and Milagros in Masbate where she was hosted by former Vice Gov. Mario Espinosa.

"I just came from Masbate now where 20 percent of cattle production come from. But they need changes in government policies," she added.

Masbate and Sorsogon provinces in the southern part of the region are the two areas most prone to violence during elections and political exercises.

During the elections in May last year, 16 persons were killed—including four candidates—in election and politics-related violent incidents, prompting the Commission on Elections to declare the whole of Masbate and parts of Sorsogon under its control.

The latest incident of political violence was the killing in Aug. 10 last year of Masbate City Mayor Moises Espinosa Jr.

The President said her economic program for the region and the rest of the country, the Kalahi program, will only succeed under an environment of peace and unity.

She also visited Legazpi City and is scheduled to visit Jovellar town in Albay today.

The Kalahi program aims to generate jobs and improve agricultural productivity, which, according to the President, are the means for her administration to combat poverty.

Thousands trapped as flood sweeps through Davao City

THE STREETS of Davao City turned into pools as the Davao River overflowed following hours of rain.

RYAN LIM

DAVAO CITY—Torrential rains brought floods to several areas of Mindanao destroying homes and infrastructure worth millions of pesos.

Officials said there was no reported casualty as of press time.

Thousands were displaced here and in the provinces of Davao del Sur and Davao del Norte as the water level steadily rose since late afternoon on Thursday.

Carmelito Lupo, executive officer of the Regional Disaster and Coordinating Council (RDCC) in Southern Mindanao, said at least 20 areas here were submerged in waist-deep water because of the swollen Davao River.

The hardest hit was the Jade Valley Village in Tigatto District, which was virtually submerged in 5-foot deep flood.

Residents had to climb to the roofs of their houses to avoid being carried by strong currents.

Rubber boats from the Philippine Coast Guard, the Navy's Special Warfare Group (SWAG) and some volunteers were also mobilized to rescue trapped residents.

Traffic was stalled in some parts of the city after officials ordered the closure of the Bankerohan Bridge.

City officials said they fear the bridge would collapse because of huge logs carried by the rampaging waters of the Davao River.

The Maa Bridge at the city's diversion road, near the Inquirer office here, and the Pagan Bridge in Barangay Tamugan, Marilog District, had collapsed earlier.

The Davao City Disaster Coordinating Council (DCDCC) already advised bus and truck operators bound for Cagayan de Oro City and Bukidnon to use the Davao-Agusan Highway instead.

Marilyn Agonia, social welfare officer, said her office was still trying to determine the actual number of affected families, although initially, at least 600 households were listed as victims.

Agonia said seven evacuation centers were put up to temporarily house the affected families.

Vice Mayor Luis Bonguyan described the flood as "worst" but said the city has enough funds for the needs of affected families.

He also said the city government has asked the military to provide helicopters to retrieve individuals trapped in the roofs of their houses.

Most schools in the affected areas opted to postpone classes and workers did not report to work.

The Davao City Water District said as a result of the flood, at least 30,000 clients, including the downtown area, would not have water for several days.

"We intentionally cut the supply to avoid a bigger problem," Dominador Lopez, DCWD acting manager said.

Some residents also complained that water coming out of their taps was muddy.

Mayor Rodrigo Duterte urged the city council to convene and declare a state of calamity.

In Davao del Sur, seven houses were destroyed in the flood.

Water also rose in some villages of Magsaysay town, also in the said province.

In Compostela Valley, the monsoon also triggered a landslide in Barangay Tuburan in Mawab town.

The landslide rendered the main highway impassable and stalled transportation for several hours.

At least 600 families were affected in the said province.

Lupo said landslides also occurred in other parts of the region.

In Davao del Norte, at least three municipalities were still under water as of 1:30 p.m yesterday.

In the said province alone, the OCD listed 2,545 families as victims.

The affected towns were Braulio Dujali, Asuncion and Carmen.

In Medina, Misamis Oriental, the Digaguyan River also triggered floods in at least two villages.

Gov. Antonio Calingin said at least 50 families were displaced.

In the Caraga Region, the Office of the Civil Defense reported that some 106,825 people were affected by rising waters in the provinces of Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Sur and Agusan del Norte, although no one has been evacuated yet.

But it damaged several infrastructure, mostly bridges.

In Surigao del Sur alone, damage to infrastructure was estimated at P20.5 million.

"Initially, the NDCC sent P100,000 worth of medicines to Surigao del Sur while about 150 sacks of rice are being prepared for dispatching to the two provinces of Agusan," Raul Bolok, OCD Caraga director, said.

Some roads linking Butuan to Davao City and Bukidnon were already inaccessible as of late afternoon yesterday and commuters had to transfer from one vehicle to another to reach their destinations.

In Surigao City, Raymond Tiu Kinhoy, chief of the city disaster coordinating council said they were monitoring the level of seawater, particularly in the 23 island barangays, because the continued rains might trigger flashfloods.

The last flashflood experienced in the city was on Nov. 7 at the height of typhoon "Nanang." *Ayan C. Mellejor, Anthony S. Allada, Dennis Jay C. Santos, Joselle d. R. Badilla, Grace C. Albasin, Butch D. Enerio and Franklin A. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

'Golf diplomacy' crisis hounds execs

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The compulsive energy that President Macapagal-Arroyo brings to Baguio's pine tree-lined golf courses, has given local politicians a major crisis in "golf diplomacy."

No one knows how to "properly lose" to Ms Macapagal, a self-confessed golf novice.

Whether swinging deep through Camp John Hay's sand traps or putting a foot away from the ninth hole, the notoriously hot-tempered Ms Macapagal walks off the course uncharacteristically goofy and endearing, according to golfers who have seen her play.

"Because of my hectic and fluid schedules (as President), I needed to find an activity that would take me close to my family whenever I could, and that turned out to be golf," she told economist Solita Monsod here last week.

Monsod hosted the three-part live telecast of Ms Macapagal's Ulat sa Bayan (A Report to the Nation) from the presidential Mansion here last week.

Ms Macapagal quickly added this qualification: "But it is Mike (First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo) who is good in golf."

Players here estimated the President's handicap at 30-36.

Golfers peg 20-30 as the acceptable handicap for men, and 30-36 for novice women players, said Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan, an avid golfer.

Councilor Edilberto Tenefrancia, who watched Ms Macapagal play in November during the President's long All Saints' Day visit here, said her handicap was "a good enough rating for a woman who is starting out."

"It doesn't make her a bad player. I think she loves this game," he said.

But Ms Macapagal's enthusiastic, if somewhat awkward, games make "losing" to her clearly impossible, a politician here admitted.

He said most of his colleagues are male golfers, "and are not likely to sacrifice their machismo to a lady President, when they would do so willingly to (former President Fidel) Ramos."

Baguio's "secret hotline to many presidents" had always been golf, said Domogan, a former Baguio mayor.

The game had drawn countless presidents back to Baguio each year, including the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos, Ramos, and briefly, Joseph Estrada.

"Think about it. It is almost impossible for a lowly city mayor to get an appointment with the President. But here in our city, the President comes to you. It gave me the chance to (pitch) projects, and ideas, and to get them approved," Domogan explained.

Domogan, who is now Lakas-NUCD-UMDP Cordillera coordinator, gained prominence in early 1994 as a frequent golf partner of Ramos. Heavy infrastructure projects were pumped in Baguio City during Ramos' term.

Last Saturday, Ramos referred to Domogan as his very own "secret weapon," at the inauguration of the Camp John Hay Manor, where he delighted onlookers with naughty stories about Domogan's legs.

Domogan's most famous Inquirer photograph is of the former mayor swinging a golf club wearing nothing more than a traditional Bago Igorot g-string and headgear.

The Baguio congressman said Ms Macapagal is the only lady President he knew who would frequent the city's golf courses as often as Ramos.

The other lady President, Corazon Aquino, is remembered in John Hay, but only for a supposed accident when the presidential helicopter landed on John Hay's golf courses.

Since her assumption into office in January last year, Ms Macapagal's aides admitted having had little luck at pairing the President off with "suitable" players.

Leaders here have, in fact, offered to give their female colleagues crash courses in golf to allow them access to Ms Macapagal.

One perfect candidate, they say, is Baguio Vice Mayor Betty Lourdes Tabanda, largely because she herself admitted to have no general interest in the sport.

But Tabanda has not responded to these overtures.

Ms Macapagal willingly spends whole stretches of the morning playing 18 holes at John Hay, whenever she flies to the city.

A typical over-achiever, she apparently repeats whole courses to overturn her previous bad games.

"That's my first! That's my first!" she yelped here in girlish delight on Dec. 27, as one of her balls finally cleared a difficult hill of the John Hay course.

Ms Macapagal casually rode the fairways toward the ball, when she suddenly smiled and pointed out spots at the base of the hill to reporters, where, she said, her wild swings lost her several balls.

Last Nov. 1, as she tried to concentrate on driving her ball into a hole only a few yards away, a cellular phone suddenly rang to shatter the silence.

But oblivious to the noise, Ms Macapagal swung once and drove the ball tightly into the hole.

"Another first," she remarked to her nodding husband who stood quietly by the trees.

FILE

HOW to conveniently "lose" a round of golf to a female President has rattled the game of many a golfer who want to cozy up to Ms Macapagal through golf.

MNLF men hit Malaysian envoy

DAVAO CITY—Leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front loyal to Nur Misuari said it was irresponsible for Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar to say that the jailed rebel leader 'has no grounds to appeal for intervention from Muslim nations."

The MNLF leaders said they were shocked when Albar told the Malaysian paper, The Sun, that Misuari "is no longer an official permanent observer to the 57-nation strong Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC)."

"Albar showed that he is an ugly conspirator to divide the Bangsamoro people of Mindanao," Ustadz Khabir Malik, a commander of the Task Force Jabal Uhud, said.

Malik also likened Albar to an "anti-peace demigod bent on straining the relationship of the Muslims in Southeast Asia."

Jimmy Labawan, vice chair of the Misuari-led MNLF Central Committee said he was sad that the Malaysian official "could be so naïve and ignorant about the affairs of the Bangsamoro people."

Labawan said the OIC continues to recognize Misuari and did not expel him "contrary to what is being peddled around."

"He (Albar) is dragging the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Eight into shame and irrelevance by projecting himself as the arrogant spokesman of the group," he said.

Misuari's top aides said they also suspect that Malaysia was conniving with the Philippine government to prop the 15-man Council of 15 to marginalize the rebel chief. *Allan A. Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

John O seeks relief of customs execs over smuggled rice

By Malou G. Apalisok and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Sen. John Osmeña has recommended the relief of the two top Bureau of Customs officials in Cebu in the wake of the "disappearance" of a cargo vessel that contained P18-million worth of seized smuggled rice at a Cebu wharf on Christmas Eve.

Osmeña said he has recommended to Malacañang the relief of District Customs Collector Roberto Sacramento and his deputy, Santiago Maravillas, and for the Department of Finance to look for their replacements.

Coast Guard authorities were still unable to locate the MV Great Faith, a 978-ton cargo vessel owned by Sampaguita Shipping Lines based in Pagadian City, that "mysteriously disappeared" from the privately-owned Ouano Wharf in Mandaue City on Christmas Eve with its load of 18,000 sacks of seized Vietnam rice.

The vessel had been impounded in the wharf since Sept. 13 for carrying the smuggled rice.

Maravillas said they had received confusing reports about the vessel's location. A report said it was sighted in Catbalogan, Samar. Other reports said it was spotted in Siocon, Zamboanga del Sur, and near Gl Island near Cantilan and Carascal towns, also in Zamboanga del Sur.

The senator said that a top official from the executive department sought his opinion in view of what happened at the Ouano wharf.

He said he recommended to "remove them (Sacramento and Maravilla) both and let the Department of Finance look for their replacement so you won't blame me."

But Osmeña said he believed that the loss of the seized rice fell on the lap of Maravillas, as he has been directed to take charge of the local Customs bureau in the absence Sacramento.

Maravillas was the acting district customs collector of Cebu until last month when Osmeña asked the Department of Finance to replace him.

The senator's complaint stemmed from rampant rice smuggling in Cebu and Maravillas' alleged failure to check the problem.

Osmeña said he learned that Sacramento was on leave when the loss of the P18-million worth of rice happened. The Customs official, according to Osmeña, was in Baguio City "to attend to a family problem."

Osmeña said he has received a faxed copy of the memorandum issued by Sacramento in which he instructed Maravillas to act as district collector during Sacramento's absence.

Asked to comment over the loss of the rice shipment at the Ouano wharf which the family of Mandaue City Mayor Thadeo Ouano owns, Osmeña said in Cebuano: "Only rats don't believe that smuggling is going on in the Ouano wharf."

Earlier, Osmeña implicated Mayor Ouano in smuggling, an accusation that the Mandaue City official strongly denied.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, Visayas and Mindanao willl experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers becoming widespread rains over central Mindanao. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers. SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 20°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 22° Lo 10°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	HI 20° Lo 14°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 16°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 21°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 28° Lo 18°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	HI 25° Lo 23°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 26° Lo 18°
Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	HI 27° Lo 22°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	HI 27° Lo 25°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	HI 29° Lo 23°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	HI 26° Lo 23°
Gen. Santos	Rainy	HI 30° Lo 23°
Zamboanga	Rainy	HI 31° Lo 23°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/01/05/02

ROUNDUP

More lumber for Camiguin

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY--Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez has ordered the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Northern Mindanao to donate more lumber for the rehabilitation of areas devastated by the Camiguin tragedy last year. Fernando Quililan, environment regional executive director, said they will ship an additional 15,000 board feet of lumber to the province to be used to rebuild the houses of victims of the Nov. 7 flash flood and whirlwind triggered by Typhoon "Nanang."

Butch D. Enerio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

American found dead

DAVAO CITY--Police here said they found no evidence of foul play in the death of an American national inside a hotel room here. Senior Insp. Fe Basan, Sta. Ana police station chief said Joseph Loivelli, 60, a native of Washington DC, apparently died of "natural cause." "We suspect he died of a cardiac arrest," she said. Loivelli's body was discovered on Thursday, after a stench was traced from his room at the Regency Inn here, where he was staying since Dec. 22 last year. When the management decided to forcibly open Loivelli's room, the decomposing body of the American was found near the door.

Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Bribery charge dismissed

BAMBANG, Nueva Vizcaya—The office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon dismissed direct bribery charges against former Ifugao Gov. Ildefonso Dulinayan for lack of probable cause. The Ombudsman, however, found youth leader Ivan Baguilat liable for the charge. Dulinayan and Baguilat were arrested by National Bureau of Investigation agents on charges of receiving P30,000 in marked money from a contractor on June 28 last year. The case stemmed from an extortion complaint filed by Alice Magno, owner of Carlyz Enterprises, against Baguilat and Dulinayan before the NBI.

Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Fishpond caretaker hunted

BULACAN, Bulacan-—Police are hunting a fishpond caretaker in Barangay Taliptip here who was believed to have shot and killed his neighbor whom he caught stealing *bangus* (milkfish) on Wednesday. Reports said Arnel Visaya shot Zaldy Torres in the chest using a shotgun, and fled. Recovered from the scene were 24 pieces of *bangus*, a fishing rod, a fish net and a fish container. Visaya was charged with homicide before the municipal trial court here.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Ecija's top wanted nabbed

CABANATUAN CITY—Police arr ested Nueva Ecija's most wanted criminal while he was about to rob an Indian businessman on Thursday in Pulilan, Bulacan. Supt. Raul Bacalzo, Nueva Ecija police director, said Luciano Patiag, also known as Amang Patiag, has 10 murder, frustrated murder and robbery cases in Nueva Ecija and Bulacan. Patiag, who was arrested with a certain Ruping Carlos, has a P350,000-reward for his capture.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Road mishap kills 1

BACOLOD CITY—A person was killed and 34 others were injured on Thursday when a passenger bus turned turtle along the highway at Hacienda Villa Elena in Barangay Tortosa, Manapla town. Rodolfo Hermoso, of Bacolod City, died in the hospital in Bacolod due to loss of blood. Chief Insp. Jerry Bartolome, Manapla police chief, said the Pearl Orient Express bus lost its brakes while trying to overtake a car. The bus then slammed into an electrical post and flipped over several times. The bus was negotiating on a slippery road when the accident occurred, police investigations showed.

Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Wage hike effective Jan. 6

CEBU CITY—The P5 wage increase for private sector workers in Central Visayas will take effect on Sunday. Melencio Balanag, regional director of the Department of Labor and Employment, said Wage Order No. 9 will automatically take effect on Jan. 6 even if its implementing rules and guidelines have yet to be approved by the Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Board.

Debra Jane Magallon, PDI Visayas Bureau

Mabitac murder suspect shot

MABITAC, Laguna—A suspect in the killing of the uncle of the late Mayor Bernardo R. Sayarot and a woman companion were wounded when the former resisted arrest by joint elements of Mabitac and provincial police on Sunday. Laguna police said in a report that at dawn of Dec. 30, police went to Barangay Paagahan to arrest Sencio Pundano, a suspect in the killing two years ago of Hipolito Rementilla, uncle of Sayarot. As the policemen approached Pundano's house, about 10 armed men in camouflage uniforms fired at them. The police engaged the group in a firefight, wounding Pundano and a certain Andrea Garcia.

Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

QUARRY CONTROVERSY

Rift appears between Lapid, GMA

MACAPAGAL

LAPID

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Feeling abandoned by President Macapagal-Arroyo, Pampanga Gov. Manuel Lapid on Friday declared war on the Natural Resources Development Corp. and warned of a tough court fight against the firm's bid to retake the tax-rich quarry industry.

Lapid revealed his hard stance after the Court of Appeals on Friday ordered the provincial government to answer within 10 days the NRDC's motion for a temporary restraining order.

This came even after he asked last month the President, his ally, to urge the NRDC not to appeal a court decision that upheld the right of the provincial government to manage the quarry industry and collect taxes from it.

"*Laban na kung laban*," the governor said in a two-page statement.

The NRDC, through the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel, filed the TRO before Christmas. The corporate arm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources challenged the Dec. 5 decision of the regional trial court here.

The court ruled that Proclamation No. 66, issued by deposed President Joseph Estrada, did not give the NRDC the right to collect quarry taxes. The court said the Mining Act of 1995 and the Local Government Code gave that right to the provincial government.

The court war erupted exactly three years after Estrada ordered the DENR and the NRDC to take over the management of the industry that has generated money from the millions of tons of sand belched out by Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991.

"This will be a tough court war," Lapid told the INQUIRER by telephone.

In his statement, Lapid said he felt abandoned by the Macapagal administration. He said he felt waging a "lonely fight" in asserting the provincial government's right to collect quarry taxes.

"*Sana mali ang kutob ko*," Lapid said. In the interview, he expressed surprise and displeasure over the unusual silence of the provincial board and Vice Gov. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo on the issue.

Lapid also said the NRDC move reeked of political motivations. "*Ginawa na ito ng nakaraang administrasyon bilang pampulitikang paghihiganti. Ngayon, uulitin na naman. Sobra na*," he said.

The order of Estrada, Lapid's erstwhile political ally, also came after the Office of the Ombudsman filed graft charges against the actor-governor for alleged illegal collection of quarry funds on top of the P40 charged for every truckload of sand hauled out from the province.

"The province was the worst hit by the eruptions and lahar flows. The Kapampangans suffered so much. Why can't we benefit now from the quarry that the court recognized as rightly ours?" Lapid said.

At an average of P190,000 daily since Dec. 8, the provincial government had grossed in just four days its monthly share of P600,000 from the NRDC, he said.

The provincial quarry task force charges P200 per truckload of sand, P100 lower than what the NRDC had been collecting since January 1999.

The NRDC reported collecting at least P98.832 million until August last year.

"You can just imagine how much is being lost to the province when the quarry industry is under the NRDC. The interest of the province is at stake here," Lapid said. He estimated that the province lost P50 million in revenues under the NRDC.

The governor said the revenues generated by his office would be used to augment flood mitigation projects and social services. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Man claiming to be CNN guy dupes Pagadian folk

PAGADIAN CITY—The National Bureau of Investigation launched a manhunt against a man who duped several residents here by passing off as a correspondent of the Cable News Network (CNN).

Lawyer Glen Peralta, NBI officer, said the suspect, a certain Seth Sanchez, also managed to victimize the owner of a local newspaper and several military officers here.

Peralta said in November, Sanchez arrived in the city, supposedly to cover the abduction of Italian priest Giuseppe Pierantoni.

The suspect, who also introduced himself to his victims as Miguel Cuevas Rodriguez, checked-in at the Guillermo Hotel.

He managed to befriend Cecilia Yu, the hotel's owner, who also owns the City Star Weekly.

Yu, Peralta said, even allowed the suspect to manage her newspaper for sometime, where he contributed commentaries.

Sanchez was able to convince Yu that he would settle his hotel dues as soon as CNN sent him money.

But aside from owing Yu some P200,000, Sanchez was also able to convince Cris Llanos, managing editor of the City Star to lend him P10,000 "as he was running out of funds."

The INQUIRER learned that the suspect made it appear he was sending regular stories to CNN when he interviewed several military officials, using a rented video camera.

He went around onboard a rented car "looking for updates on Pierantoni," according to Peralta.

On Dec. 18, Sanchez left the hotel onboard a red car with two residents of this city.

Upon reaching Labangan town, which is about 15 kilometers from here, the suspect told the two locals to alight and wait because he was to meet an emissary of the kidnappers somewhere in the town.

It was later learned that Sanchez sped off toward Ozamiz City. *Hernan P. de la Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Robbers kill 3, wound 1 in Isabela

ILAGAN, Isabela—After taking P700,000 in cash, five robbers killed three family members and wounded another on Thursday night in Barangay Villaluz in Delfin Albano town, about 60 kilometers from here.

Supt. Nelson Nario, Isabela police director, identified the fatalities as Manuel Padre, 48, his wife Nenita, 48, and their daughter Roda, 22.

Manuel's eldest daughter, Rochelle, 24, survived the attack and was treated for stab wounds at the community hospital in Delfin Albano.

Early Friday, police arrested the principal suspect, Florentino Labuguen, a worker at Padre's store. Four of his companions, however, eluded arrest.

The victims suffered bullet and stab wounds, investigators said.

Nario sent his men from the intelligence division of the provincial headquarters to help local police arrest the suspects.

"The Padres are known in the area as God-fearing. They were loved by the people so the robbery angle is what we are pursuing," Nario said.

Police said the suspects entered Padre's house by destroying the fence and back door about 7 p.m. Thursday.

The robbers left a knife, which was believed used in the killing, and a kilo of meat they took from the family's refrigerator.

Reports said the Padre family was keeping the money because they were supposed to buy a second-hand passenger jeep on Friday. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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INQUIRER Visayas

JUN BANDAYREL, Editor ■ EDRALYN L. BENEDICTO, Bureau Chief

Bamboo takes centerstage in feast

Town celebrates its new path to progress, re-greening

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
Maasin town, Iloilo

THIS mountain town, 30 kilometers from Iloilo City, brings the year to a close by celebrating its lore and way of life through the Tultugan Festival, named after a bamboo drum.

Like the indigenous drum that communicates messages among early Ilonggos, the festival held last Dec. 29 also conveyed messages of hope through its theme "Guiding the Youth Toward Unity, Peace and Progress."

The festival also sought to promote appreciation of local culture.

Maasin is the leading producer of bamboo and its products like *sawali* (mat), furniture, lampshades, fans, ashtrays, home decors and other handicraft.

The town's watershed, which is the source of drinking water for tens of thousands of residents of Iloilo City, was reforested partly with bamboo since the 1980s.

"The festival uses bamboo, which projects our economy. This is the reason why we have organized it," said Maasin Mayor Mariano Malones.

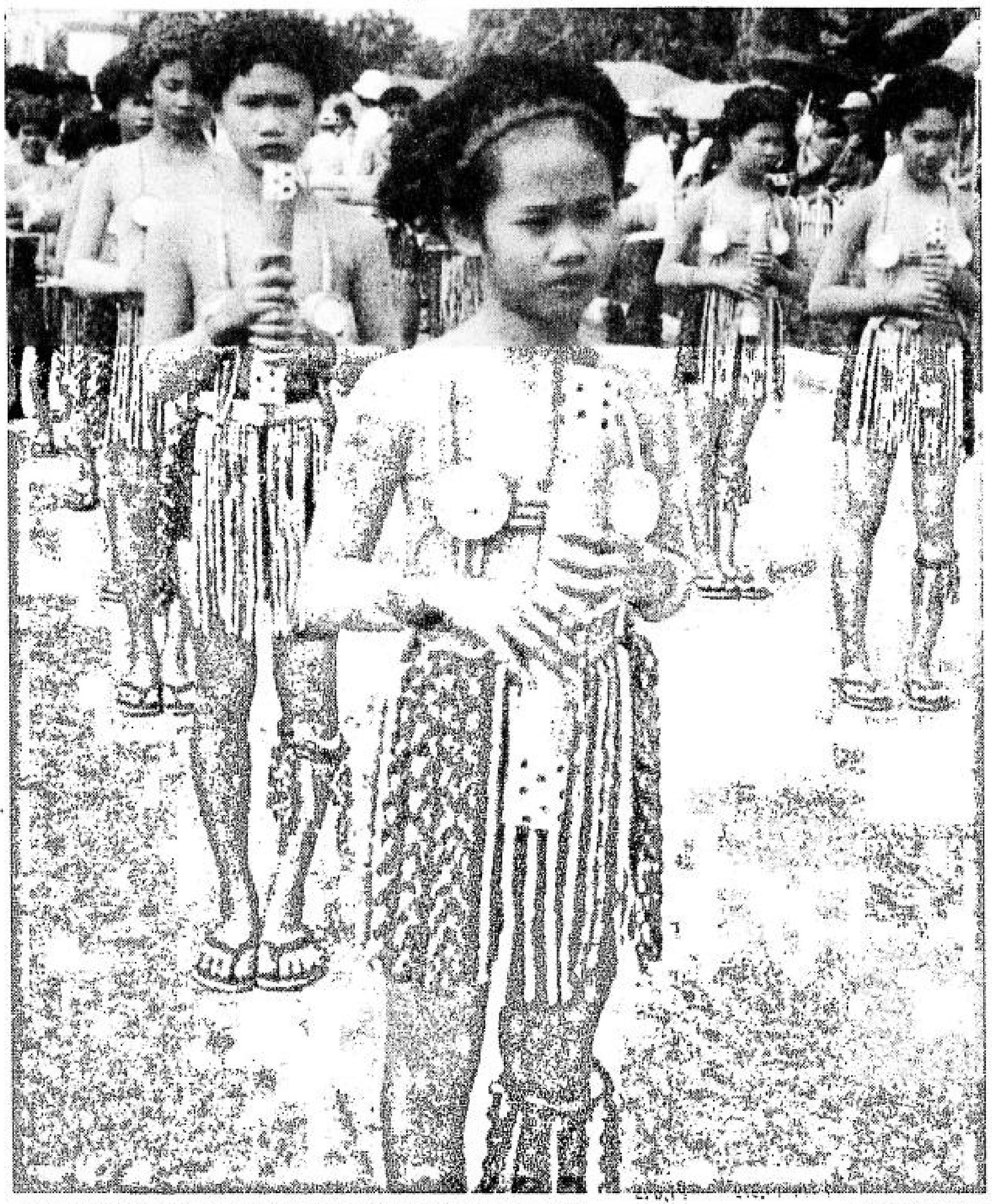
Rep. Arthur Defensor of Iloilo's third district said Maasin is unique because it displays the role of the bamboo in the town's development.

The town also uses bamboo as a medium of expressing the creativity of its people.

The highlight of the festival was the parade of tribes decked in bamboo—skirts, G-strings, elaborate headdresses, even brassieres.

Spindly boys and girls, many of them from upland barangays of the town, swayed, bent, shook, waved and rocked to the beat of scores of *tultugan*, the bamboo drum.

The tribes depicted the lore of bamboo, like the story of Malakas and Maganda, the equivalent of the Judaeo-Christian story of creation, in which the first Filipino man and women emerged out of bamboo tubes after the tubes were pecked by a bird.



A TULTUGAN festival performer dressed in bamboo accessories. FEMIA PEDREGOSA

Other street dances retold the history of the town and the importance of bamboo in the town's efforts to re-green parched earth, among others.

The participants in the elementary school category were the Tribu Kagingking of the Nagba Elementary School; Purogwan of Layog Elementary School; Lipak of Burak Elementary School; Bikil of Daja Elementary School; Buriraw of Quiling Elementary School; Kisami of the Cabankalan Elementary School; Sadok of the Maasin Central Elementary School; Piliw-piliwan of the Dagami Elementary School.

For the secondary schools, the participants were the Tribu Amakan of the Siwalo National High School; Binalantak of the Burac National High School; Tambo of the Maasin National High School; Tinugbong of the Layog National High School; Rara of the Tigbauan National High School and Dabong of the Quiling National High School.

Launched in 1999, the Tultugan Festival has now earned national recognition as one of the country's culture-based festival.

It is now included in the Department of Tourism's calendar of activities.

The festival was envisioned to enhance the town's standing as a tourist destination.

Maasin is a favorite of nature lovers, mountaineers and environmentalists.

Visitors are encouraged to see the success of community-based reforestation projects.

Other attractions in Tultugan were the parade of *lechons* or roasted pigs on bamboo skewers and Guapa Karabao contest, which featured carabaos in outlandish costumes.

The carabao contest was meant to pay tribute to the beasts of burden, which have been the trusty companions of many farmers in Iloilo.

In Saturday's parade, some carabaos were painted with the jersey of Michael Jordan, had pedicures, or were draped with a cape adorned with leaves and ripe fruits of the achuete tree.

In the afternoon, townsfolk gathered to witness the contest of who could weave *amakan* at the fastest time. A top product of the town, *amakan* is used as a drying mat of palay (unhusked rice).

They are also used as parts of the house like ceilings and walls and as dance floors in village dances. It was said that the pasa doble and the cha-cha are best performed on *amakan* because it is smooth and not rough on the heels.

Malones said that each year, Tultugan has become more colorful and lively because the tribes have gained more experience and expertise in their performances.

Iloilo's top golf course also Philippines' oldest

By Hazel P. Villa
Sta. Barbara, Iloilo

NO SELF-respecting golfer will plane in to Iloilo and not get to take a swing at the historic Iloilo Golf and Country Club in Sta. Barbara town, 16 kilometers north of Iloilo City.

The Iloilo Golf and Country Club was built in 1907 by a group of British and Scottish expatriates working on the Panay Railway System, according to archives of the regional Department of Tourism.

Thirteen of them organized the construction of the first short course of nine holes. It was known then as the Polo Golf Club.

"Golf Digest," Asia's largest English language golfing publication described the golf course in Sta. Barbara as "the oldest course in the Philippines and one of the oldest courses in Asia."

Now, Panay Island's top golf course has 18 holes spread out on 30 hectares. The sprawling vista, exactly as how nature first made it, is covered with perpetually manicured healthy greens and dotted with several century-old trees.

A small lake is ringed with huge hardwood trees whose branches almost dip into the waters.

It was only in the 1950s that the more modern fairway design was made. Writers of the coffee table book, "Iloilo, the Book" wrote that as workmen went about dredging in the 1980s, they stumbled on rubber golf balls—the type that golfers used circa 1899-1910. That undisputedly makes the Iloilo Golf and Country Club one of the oldest in Asia.

TAKING a swing at the country's oldest golf course. JONATHAN GUERVA

Now, dimpled golf balls roll on the fairways and some Ilonggo golfers smitten with the sport take to the Iloilo Golf and Country Club as their second home.

It is not only golf—there's the spanking new clubhouse cum café and watering hole overlooking the greens. In this pleasantly relaxing atmosphere, Iloilo's crème-de-la-crème chat about politics, do business deals or simply argue "who played well today."

Golf-challenged folks who rather soak in Iloilo Golf and Country Club's old-world natural ambiance can always go for a walk done best in the early mornings when the softest dew settles in or at dusk when the crickets sound off and the skies give birth to a red-orange indescribably beautiful hue.

A Grinch stole Xmas and a 'belen' in Dumaguete

By Alex Pal
Dumaguete City

FIRST, it was the life-size *belen* (nativity scene) that disappeared. Recently, 119 Christmas lanterns donated to the City Tourism Council have also disappeared while in the custody of the City Mayor's Office.

The colored and lighted lanterns, similar to the other lanterns which light up the south end of this city's historic Rizal Boulevard, are part of the 1,000 lanterns donated by the company that makes Vaseline Lotion.

Dr. Rico Absin, chair of the City Tourism Council, said some lanterns were discovered missing since the city fiesta celebrations on Nov. 25.

"These lights are already city government property so I entrusted them to the Office of the Mayor so there would be proper accountability. The next time I checked, they could not account for 119 lanterns," Absin said.

Absin said unidentified persons brought out some of the lanterns. "There were no signatures of the people who took them," he said.

Surprise

When informed of the theft recently, Mayor Agustin Perdices said he did not know about it and expressed surprise why his staffers did not inform him. He said he would check the report.

Absin has, meanwhile, given up hope of finding the life-size belen of the city government, which disappeared after the Christmas holidays last January.

The belen, which was the highlight of the Christmas decorations at the Quezon Park here last year, was also donated by Vaseline Lotion.

The city government had to spend P20,000 early this month for another belen after efforts to locate the life-size belen failed, Absin said.

Absin described efforts to find the missing belen as "similar to the Nida Blanca case."

Perdices had announced in November that whoever could find the belen or provide information that would lead to its eventual recovery, would get a reward.

Rewards

"If he is a city government employee, this will be a plus for promotion. If he is not a government employee, this will be a plus if he applies (for a job) with the city."

The zealousness of the police in looking for the belen led them to a house owned by a certain Mister Rendoque, which was believed to be the house where the government decorations were kept.

When police got there, the decorations were no longer there, leading them to trace the decorations all the way to the Dumaguete Cathedral Church.

They saw repainted decorations but these turned out to be genuine Church-owned antiques.

Wrong tip

Former City Vice Mayor Woodrow Maquiling, who also chairs the Parish Pastoral Council of the Dumaguete Cathedral Church, said someone must have mistakenly tipped off the police that people identified with former Mayor Felipe Remollo had a hand in the disappearance of the belen.

He said most of the Remollo-appointed 54 employees whose appointments were invalidated by Perdices volunteered to help in beautifying the Church.

"Let's stop looking for a belen. Anyway, there's already a replacement. But perhaps, a local government official or barangay official took fancy on it and took it home," Absin said.

Perdices, however, is holding on to hope. "We're hoping that whoever has it will just secretly return it. It really belongs to the city so I hope (the person who took it will feel guilty and return it)."

BIN LADEN

HITLER

BUSH

ANISTON

PRINCESS DIANA

SADDAM

Bin Laden dislodges Hitler as most hated

(From page A1)

Laden the world's "most prominent personality of 2001;" they also chose US President George W. Bush "the most stupid personality of the year."

Saddam Hussein came third most hated in the poll conducted with over 1,500 visitors to the Madame Tussaud's waxworks in December. The results were published on Friday.

Princess Diana, who spent 15 years at No. 1 in the "Most Beautiful Woman" category, failed this time to make the top three.

Instead, "Friends" star Jennifer Aniston beat Australian pop singer Kylie Minogue and evergreen superstar Madonna to take the title.

But her husband, fellow actor Brad Pitt, was pipped to the top spot in the "Most Handsome Male" category by England soccer captain David Beckham.

The contrasting results of the two polls once more illustrates that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.

The result of the Baghdad poll was reported by two Iraqi newspapers Thursday.

The official daily al-Jumhuriya said it sounded out 13 Iraqis whom it considered as representative of the population and who unanimously voted Bin Laden personality of the year.

It said their choice fell on Bin Laden for "enhancing Islam's standing and defying the United States, which constantly seeks to harm the Arabs," mainly by seeking to maintain the UN-imposed embargo on Iraq.

The weekly al-Zawra said an undetermined number of respondents picked Bin Laden as "best personality of 2001" for his "bold resistance" of Washington's "abhorrent aggression" despite the disparity in their military capacities.

Bush easily won the title of "most stupid personality of the year," which he deserved for "his unrivaled recklessness and foolishness that took the world to the brink of destruction," al-Zawra said.

The United States accuses Bin Laden of masterminding the Sept. 11 terror attacks on New York and Washington and said it would get him "dead or alive."

Iraq, which has been under an embargo since its 1990 invasion of neighboring Kuwait, is one of few countries in the world not to have condemned the anti-US attacks and is seen as a potential target of Washington's "war on terror." *Reuters, AFP*

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CEBU	5J - 557	Daily	0130	0240	P2,608	P2,309	P1,999
	5J - 559*	Daily	0600	0710			
	5J - 561	Daily	0700	0810			
	5J - 563	Daily	0900	1010			
	5J - 565*	Daily	1000	1110			
	5J - 567*	Daily	1200	1310			
	5J - 569	Daily	1500	1610			
	5J - 571*	Daily	1600	1710			
DAVAO	5J - 961	Daily	0430	0610	P3,307	P2,919	P2,399
	5J - 963*	Daily	1020	1200			
	5J - 965*	Daily	1310	1450			
	5J - 967*	Daily	1510	1650			
CAGAYAN de ORO	5J - 381*	Daily	0600	0725	P3,295	P2,919	P2,399
	5J - 383*	Daily	0950	1115			
TACLOBAN	5J - 651	Daily	0610	0720	P2,718	P2,419	P1,999
	5J - 655	Daily	1210	1320			
ILOILO	5J - 451*	Daily	0600	0700	P2,498	P2,199	P1,949
	5J - 455	Daily	0955	1055			
	5J - 459	Daily	1600	1700			
BACOLOD	5J - 473*	Daily	0610	0710	P2,498	P2,199	P1,949
	5J - 475	Daily	1000	1100			
	5J - 479	Daily	1640	1740			
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 851*	Daily	0620	0750	P3,295	P2,639	P2,399
ROXAS	5J - 373*	Daily	0620	0720	P2,279	P1,979	P1,649
DUMAGUETE	5J - 627	Daily	1340	1450	P2,608	P2,309	P1,999
KALIBO	5J - 339	Daily	0900	0950	P2,608	P2,309	P1,999

*Flight schedule effective 15 January 2002

ORIGIN: CEBU

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 558*	Daily	0400	0510	P2,608	P2,309	P1,999
	5J - 562	Daily	0900	1010			
	5J - 564	Daily	1100	1210			
	5J - 566*	Daily	1200	1310			
	5J - 568*	Daily	1600	1710			
	5J - 570	Daily	1700	1810			
	5J - 572*	Daily	1800	1910			
	5J - 574*	Daily	1900	2010			
DAVAO	5J - 593*	Daily	0855	0945	P2,339	P2,039	P1,649
	5J - 597*	Daily	1350	1440			
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 431*	W/Th/Sat	1005	1100	P2,388	P2,089	P1,799
ILOILO	5J - 162*	Daily	0750	0825			P1,399
	5J - 164*	Daily	1650	1725	P1,799	P1,599	
BACOLOD	5J - 126*	M/W/Th/Sat	1150	1220	P1,599	P1,399	P1,199
CLARK	5J - 588*	Tu/F/Sun	1150	1310	P2,995	P2,669	P2,399

*Flight schedule effective 15 January 2002

ORIGIN: DAVAO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 962	Daily	0720	0900	P3,307	P2,919	P2,399
	5J - 964*	Daily	1240	1420			
	5J - 966*	Daily	1530	1710			
	5J - 968*	Daily	1730	1910			
CEBU	5J - 594*	Daily	1025	1115	P2,339	P2,039	P1,649
	5J - 598*	Daily	1520	1610			
ILOILO --via Cebu	5J - 598/164*	Daily	1520	1725	P3,295	P2,839	P2,549
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 393*	M/Tu/F/Sun	1010	1110	P2,388	P2,089	P1,799

*Flight schedule effective 15 January 2002

ORIGIN: ILOILO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 452*	Daily	0900	1000			
	5J - 456	Daily	1135	1235	P2,498	P2,199	P1,949
	5J - 460*	Daily	1805	1905			
CEBU	5J - 161*	Daily	0740	0815	P1,799	P1,599	P1,399
	5J - 165 *	Daily	1740	1815			
DAVAO --via Cebu	5J - 161/593*	Daily	0740	0945	P3,295	P2,839	P2,549

*Flight schedule effective 15 January 2002

ORIGIN: CAGAYAN DE ORO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 382*	Daily	0805	0930	P3,295	P2,919	P2,399
	5J - 384*	Daily	1155	1320			

*Flight schedule effective 15 January 2002

ORIGIN: TACLOBAN

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 652	Daily	0800	0910	P2,718	P2,419	P1,999
	5J - 656	Daily	1400	1510			

ORIGIN: CLARK

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
CEBU	5J - 589*	Tu/F/Sun	1350	1510	P2,995	P2,669	P2,399

*Flight schedule effective 15 January 2002

ORIGIN: BACOLOD

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 474*	Daily	0800	0900	P2,498	P2,199	P1,949
	5J - 476	Daily	1150	1250			
	5J - 480	Daily	1830	1930			
CEBU	5J - 125*	M/W/Th/Sat	1310	1340	P1,599	P1,399	P1,199

*Flight schedule effective 15 January 2002

ORIGIN: ZAMBOANGA

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 852*	Daily	1150	1320	P3,295	P2,639	P2,399
CEBU	5J - 432*	W/Th/Sat	0830	0925	P2,388	P2,089	P1,799
DAVAO	5J - 394*	M/Tu/F/Sun	0830	0930	P2,388	P2,089	P1,799

*Flight schedule effective 15 January 2002

ORIGIN: ROXAS

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 374*	Daily	0800	0900	P2,279	P1,979	P1,649

*Flight schedule effective 15 January 2002

ORIGIN: DUMAGUETE

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 628	Daily	1530	1640	P2,608	P2,309	P1,999

ORIGIN: KALIBO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 340	Daily	1030	1120	P2,608	P2,309	P1,999

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

FROM	- TO	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA
MANILA -	HONGKONG	5J - 112	Daily	0850	1050
		5J - 118	Daily	1640	1840
HONG KONG -	MANILA	5J - 113	Daily	1150	1350
		5J - 119	Daily	1940	2140

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CEBU PACIFIC

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Asia is last bastion of Bin Laden's terror network

(From page A1)

groups in the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia in Southeast Asia as well as Pakistan, India and Bangladesh in South Asia.

Asian governments should "take pre-emptive action against known al-Qaida members and supporters currently living in these countries," it said.

Cooperation among the security, intelligence and judicial agencies among members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) was making an impact.

But the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir was hampering cooperation within South Asia, it said.

"Considering the escalating threat facing Asia, it is important for Asian governments to act decisively against al-Qaida," it said.

The article revealed that "al-Qaida members in Singapore are believed to have been about to launch an operation, but were stopped by Bin Laden for a reason that is not yet clear to outsiders."

There were no other details about the supposed operation in Singapore.

Bin Laden has been accused of masterminding the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on Washington and New York which left some 3,000 people dead.

Responding to questions about the report on the aborted attack, Singapore's Ministry of Home Affairs said it was "unaware of what the Jane's report is referring to." The ministry did not comment further.

Jane's Intelligence Review, a London-based monthly risk analysis journal, did not give any details about the reportedly planned operation.

Muslims comprise about 15 percent of the 4 million people in Singapore, a wealthy, highly modernized Southeast Asian city-state.

Muslims are also a minority in the Philippines, and form the majorities in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Shortly after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, Singapore's most senior Islamic leader, Mufti Syed Isa Mohammad Semait, said the country's Muslims were committed to peace and that he did not know anyone who sympathized with terrorists just because they have the same religion.

Singapore's leaders have staunchly backed the US-led war on terrorism.

The country has strong military and economic ties with the United States. It has one of two piers in Southeast Asia where US aircraft carriers can dock and is home to a US Navy logistics unit.

Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said last year that terrorist groups with links to Bin Laden had tried and failed to recruit Singaporeans. Other terrorists had surveyed the island country's coastline for opportunities to attack passing US ships, Goh said. He did not identify the terrorist groups involved.

Singapore, a tightly controlled country known for its large, efficient armed forces and strict law enforcement, has stepped up security since the Sept. 11 attacks.

Goh, speaking in October, warned that the US-led strikes on Afghanistan could lead to a "danger that radical groups in our part of the world may mount attacks in the region to support Osama." *AP, AFP*

JESS YUSON

NO CHANGES in the billing starring Drilon as Senate president, as indicated in the senators' picture gallery on the second floor of the Senate building.

Drilon appeases 7 disgruntled senators

(From page A1)

The source identified the senators as Senate President Pro Tempore Manuel Villar, Majority Floor Leader Loren Legarda, finance committee chair John Osmeña, Ralph Recto, Noli de Castro, Robert Barbers and Ramon Revilla.

According to the source, Villar and Legarda had wanted to be given vice chairmanships in any subcommittee of the powerful finance committee but that their requests were not granted.

Under Senate rules, Senate officials, like the president pro tempore and majority floor leader, are barred from holding chairmanship or vice chairmanship in any of the committees.

The source said that Recto was disappointed after his request to sponsor the realignment of P13 billion that was slashed from the budget was turned down.

Revilla was reportedly peeved after his recommendation not to allocate any funds for road maintenance of the Department of Public Works and Highways was not followed and which Osmeña even restored.

Barbers had reportedly lobbied for the inclusion of a dam project in his native Caraga region but no funds were allocated.

"(Barbers) had promised the project to his province mates and may have lost face because of this," said the INQUIRER source.

Osmeña admitted that while he was among those "dissatisfied" with the majority bloc, he was not willing to take part in any move to oust Drilon.

"My dissatisfaction is not with Senator Drilon, he is capable and a good friend of mine," Osmeña said.

Osmeña pointed out that he was "dissatisfied" because, with its slim majority, the administration senators have "always been under the gun."

"I want to increase the majority because we are very thin," he added.

He also said he "did not believe that there's anything good that will change in the country if there is a change in (Senate) leadership."

Legarda denial

Legarda denied being among the "dissatisfied" administration solons and underscored that "engaging in politics is the least of my priorities."

"The people do not care who is the senate president or majority leader, what they care about are food, housing and their basic needs," she said. "And these are what we should really be bothered about."

Drilon, who is currently in Hawaii for the Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians Forum, was able to smooth out the kinks with the majority senators.

"We don't know the compromise but (Drilon) was able to woo them back to the majority," the source said.

Second time

It was the second time that Drilon's leadership was threatened.

Drilon was also in the United States with President Macapagal-Arroyo who was on a working visit when the opposition launched a failed coup.

Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta delivered a privilege speech lashing out at the country's leaders for all being in the United States while the Moro National Liberation Front fighters staged a violent uprising in Mindanao.

Aquino-Oreta moved to declare all positions in the Senate vacant.

Her motion was deferred for consideration until it failed to hold the attention of the Senate.

Drilon will only be at his post until January 2003. In a term-sharing agreement last July, Drilon will be Senate President for only a year and a half of the 12th Congress with Sen. Renato Cayetano taking over for the remainder of the term.

JOAN PIMENTEL

PIMENTEL: Not just two but seven "disenchanted" administration senators.

Denied a US visa, ailing girl . . .

(From page A1)

The unfortunate development is causing much concern to the other Filipino Gift of Life beneficiaries already set for heart operations at the Montefiore hospital after Jerden.

They are Joshua Perez, 9 months old, from Antipolo City, who is scheduled for surgery on Jan. 15, and John Morados, 3 years old, of Zamboanga City, whose operation is set for Feb. 8.

Dajed Montojo's mother Jenny, who is now serving as a volunteer for the Gift of Life program, is worried that Eden might lose hope.

Depressed

"I am terribly depressed by the way the (man) denied my application and his way of talking as if I have done something bad to the US that we were not allowed to go," Eden wrote Sandberg.

"He told me to better ask help in the Philippines because the US is not a charitable institution, and since I have raised funds for our airfare, why then should I not be able to raise money for Jerden's operation in the Philippines?" she added.

Eden, an employee at the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), does not know the name of the blond, young-looking American assigned at window No. 2 who interviewed her at 7 a.m. on Dec. 27.

She said she tried to reason with him. She told him that she had come across Dajed's story in the INQUIRER, and that the Gift of Life offer was her last hope for Jerden, who is afflicted with the ailment called atrial septal defect.

She also explained to him that her husband Jerry died of a heart ailment in 2000 because financial help for his surgery came too late.

"My husband died a year ago because of lack of money to finance his surgery here," she told Sandberg. "Though my husband was under social welfare here, it was after almost five years of waiting that his turn to be operated on was approved. But his body had already deteriorated, and he died a month before his scheduled operation."

Doubtful

Eden's words fell on deaf ears.

She said the embassy officer even expressed doubt that her husband had already died and demanded papers to prove her story.

He dismissed all her explanations and told her that she could never go to the United States.

Eden also quoted the embassy officer as saying that she should just tell the Gift of Life Foundation to send its donation of $5,000 to the Philippines so Jerden could have the surgery here.

She told him that this was not how the program worked, but the American was adamant.

She said he did not bother to confirm the details of the scheduled operation with the Montefiore hospital, or with the Gift of Life Foundation.

"The embassy officer never listened," Eden wrote Sandberg. "He told me that it's not easy to believe (my story), and (that) I cannot go to the US."

He went on to tell her that there were "children out there who needed more help than us."

The entire interview took about 15 minutes, according to Eden. At the end, close to tears, she asked the man to reconsider. But he refused.

"I can never blame him (because) maybe there are people who will lie to be able to go to the US," she said. "But I was not (lying). I even tried to show him the e-mails, aside from the other documents, and the death certificate (of my husband), but he told me there's no use for it now."

Eden said the free special surgery in New York could have been the best gift Jerden, who turned 2 on Nov. 18, would ever receive.

That—and the efforts of her family, friends and colleagues at the SBMA, who all helped raise her and Jerden's airfare to and from the United States.

Worried sick

Eden had to travel to and from Olongapo City to work on the visa applications.

The single parent is now back in Olongapo, worried sick about Jerden and careful to also attend to the needs of her first-born daughter, now 5 years old.

Eden's worst fear is that what happened to her husband Jerry would happen to Jerden.

"I am worried and afraid that Jerden might suffer the same fate as her father. I am doing everything I can to prevent this from happening," she said.

Eden hopes that it is not yet too late.

Bank collapses

(From page A1)

tion to see how it could service claims for insured deposits.

Unitrust officials said they were forced to close their branches after they lost some P100 million as panic-stricken depositors withdrew their placements in response to reports that talks to rehabilitate the bank had collapsed.

The thrift bank said in a statement that it was not bankrupt. It said it was "taking all steps to secure its viability" and was working with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) "to normalize its operations soon."

According to a depositor, Unitrust has promised to reopen on Monday. But the BSP's decision to shut it down has made this unlikely, unless a new group comes in to rehabilitate it.

Unitrust's declaration of a bank holiday comes nearly two years after the BSP closed Urban Bank Inc. in April 2000.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the policy-making Monetary Board and the PDIC would try to determine exactly what happened to Unitrust.

Norberto Nazareno, president of PDIC, said it would hasten the examination of the bank's records to immediately service the claims of its depositors.

The PDIC insures deposits up to P100,000.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said the PDIC could service most of the depositors because the majority of the accounts amounted to less than P100,000.

Mass resignation

Nazareno said in an interview that the bank run in Unitrust appeared to have been triggered by the mass resignation of its officers and the withdrawals during the holiday season.

He said over 80 PDIC staff and officers had been sent to the Unitrust branches and head office in Makati City to secure the records and take control of the bank.

Unitrust was established in 1980.

Last October, a number of investors led by Japanese businessman Genta Ogami of G. Universal Co. Ltd. and Minamoto Saiken Kaishu Co. Ltd. acquired the bank from Group Management Corp., a company controlled by former Philippine Stock Exchange president Jose Luis Yulo, former Rizal Rep. Emigdio Tanjuatco and businessman Ed del Fonso.

Three Filipino lawyers—Leopoldo Valcarcel Jr., Pedro Montañez and Francis Yuseco—agreed to pose as dummies for Ogami's group.

Buenaventura said he suspected that the bank's problems came to a head after its officers resigned when the new owners took over—a move that was not approved by the Monetary Board.

Reyes said the Monetary Board could not determine whether the new owners of Unitrust met its fit-and-proper rule because it could not get sufficient information from the Japanese government regarding the G. Universal Co. Ltd. and Minamoto Saiken Kaishu Co. Ltd.

Buenaventura said Ogami, who also owns G. Cosmos Philippines Inc., did not appear to be a direct owner of the two companies.

Control of the bank, however, has been made apparent, as its new owners have approved a resolution changing its name from Unitrust to the Philippine Bank of Ogami.

Ownership dispute

The mass resignation appeared to have resulted from an ownership dispute after the Filipino directors who posed as dummies decided to run the bank on their own.

A source privy to the issue and who spoke on condition of anonymity said the BSP found that certain Unitrust directors and officers had taken out loans without the Monetary Board's approval.

Part of the loan proceeds was used to buy out a disgruntled Filipino partner of Ogami's for P30 million, the source said.

Under BSP rules, loans to bank directors, officers, stockholders and related interests must have the approval of the Monetary Board and must not exceed a certain limit.

But Buenaventura said the problems of Unitrust should not spill over to other banks.

"This is a very small bank and a very unique situation, so I don't think it should pose any systemic risk," he told reporters.

In its statement, the PDIC said Unitrust had a deposit base of P284 million and an asset base of about P700 million, "not even less than half of one percent of the industry's total assets of P3.26 trillion."

The bank has deposit liabilities of P284 million, according to the PDIC.

Cease and desist

Ogami reportedly has a mail-fraud case in Japan and has been the subject of an investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The SEC has been trying to serve a permanent cease-and-desist order to Ogami in relation to the continued pyramiding operations of G. Cosmos.

The company, according to SEC estimates, has received P1 billion from investors.

SEC chair Lilia Bautista said Ogami could not be located and was reportedly on vacation.

G. Cosmos is alleged to have violated the Philippines' Securities Regulation Code, particularly the provisions that prohibit the sale of securities not registered with the regulatory agency.

Through nationwide television and print ads, G. Cosmos has been promoting the salvation of the world through a supposed high-yielding instrument based on an aggressive advertising campaign of mail-order products sold in Japan.

Based on complaints filed with the SEC, G. Cosmos failed to deliver on promises that investors would receive 30 percent of profit as advertised to retirees, pensioners and businessmen who were assured of earning as much as P30,000 to P50,000 a month.

A member was also assured of getting 5 percent of the profit of other recruits.

Recruitment

Earlier, the BSP told the new owners of Unitrust in a letter that the Monetary Board had yet to approve their acquisition of the bank. Pending this, they were prevented from recruiting new employees.

Unitrust had run ads in two major dailies in an aggressive campaign to recruit new personnel.

The BSP said in its letter that these paid ads gave the impression that Unitrust would go into businesses other than banking.

Reyes said Unitrust's recent ads suggested that the bank was planning to operate as a holding company.

The bank is trying to recruit executives and staff with experience "in banking or insurance," but as a thrift bank, it is barred from engaging in insurance, he said.

Reyes said he also found it strange that Unitrust was recruiting secretaries experienced in politics, movie and commercial production, environment protection, and mergers and acquisitions. *With a report from Elena R. Torrijos*

BEST Center on at Ateneo

MILO BEST Center holds its first two basketball sessions in this "Year of the Horse" today and tomorrow at the Ateneo College covered courts and St. Benedict College courts, respectively. Level 1, 2, 3, 4 and refresher classes will be conducted from 8 to 11 a.m. today, while level 1 and 2 clinics will be staged from 1 to 4 p.m. tomorrow. Call 411-6260 and 372-3065/66 or Dansei Groom Shop/Sensei Salon, 5th floor, Holiday Inn Manila, UN Avenue., 525-8191 for more details.

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▨ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

POOL: World Pool League 2001 at 8 p.m. on ESPN

BASKETBALL: NBA Inside Stuff at 11 a.m. (r – 6 p.m.) on Star Sports

NBA - Phoenix Suns vs LA Lakers at 11:30 a.m. (r – 6:30 p.m.) on Star Sports, Dallas Mavericks vs New York Knicks at 2:30 p.m. (r) on ESPN

US NCAA - Louisville vs UAB tomorrow at 2 a.m. on ESPN

GOLF: US Open Official Films - 1995 at 11 a.m. (r) on ESPN

PUMAREN ON THE WAY OUT?

Alas, Baculi eyed to coach Airfreight

BY JUNE NAVARRO

THE LINA Group of Companies yesterday said it was considering Louie Alas, Junel Baculi, Derick Pumaren and American coach Paul Coughter to coach its PBA team this year.

LGC alternate PBA board governor Lito Alvarez said the list was decided upon after a lengthy meeting with LGC chair Bert Lina.

Alas, who stepped down as coach from Talk N Text at the end of the 2001 PBA season, is strongly being considered for the position.

Next in line are Baculi, coach of Welcoat Paints in the PBL, and Coughter, coach of the Chinese-Taipei basketball team in the Jones Cup last year.

Pumaren, whose contract got absorbed by LGC after its purchase of Tanduay late last year, has two years left in his contract.

Alvarez, LGC's governor in the PBA board, said his company is searching for someone "who will fit the image of Airfreight 2100 Inc."

Better known as Federal Express, Airfreight 2100 wants "an energetic and dynamic coach so we'll go for a young Turk," said Alvarez, president of Airfreight 2100 Inc.

FedEx now owns the bragging rights to this year's top pick. Alvarez said he would most likely grab Rommel Adducul.

LGC's request to hire at least two players through the direct-hire policy was turned down by the PBA board.

Go receives 'probe' letter anew; Sering irked over it

BY MARC ANTHONY REYES

THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee ethics body has launched another investigation on athletics chief Go Teng Kok, this time regarding his remarks against sailing association's Claudio Altura during their general assembly meeting last November.

But former POC president and Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association chair Jose Sering again slammed ethics committee head Rene Cruz for being "presumptuous" and advised the former POC chief to "train your sights on non-performing national sports associations."

In his letter to Go on Jan. 2, Cruz asked Go to explain why he branded Altura a "liar" in front of the general assembly and media men. Altura handled the cases of problematic NSAs being the chief of the arbitration committee.

But Sering countered that Altura didn't even raise a complaint. The presiding officer, POC chair Robert Aventajado, quickly prevented the athletics boss from expounding his case.

"I advised him (Go) not to honor your letter," said Sering in his reply. "It is apparent from your letter that there is a prejudgment against Mr. Go Teng Kok.

"What is your beef against Mr. Go?" said Sering, who even branded Cruz's committee as "poppish than the Pope. "You have no right to be involved in this case."

Last Dec. 19, the ethics committee also called the attention of Go regarding his involvement with a convicted drug dealer, a probe called upon by ousted basketball association head Freddie Jalasco.

But Sering, who was furnished a copy of the letter, scored Cruz for going out of bounds and using the investigation to harass Go, who is a staunch critic of POC president Celso Dayrit.

Go has kept his silence throughout, saying that he will rather concentrate on providing national athletes what they need for the Busan Asian Games instead of wading through "unproductive and petty" issues.

Patafa produced nine golds during the Kuala Lumpur Southeast Asian Games – the most by any NSA – and is gunning for at least three golds in the Asiad.

KOURNIKOVA'S CONQUEROR

Anna Smashnova from Israel celebrates after winning her semifinal match yesterday against Anna Kournikova of Russia in the ASB Bank Classic women's tennis tournament in Auckland, New Zealand. Smashnova defeated Kournikova, 6-1, 6-4. AP

Uichico to supervise practice; Jacobs still at St. Luke's ICU

EVEN without Ron Jacobs, the national team resumes its training on Jan. 7 for the Asian Games to be held in Busan, South Korea this year.

San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico will take over the coaching chores as Jacobs remained confined at the St. Luke's Medical Center's ICU (intensive care unit).

Jacobs is still recovering from a stroke he had suffered almost two weeks ago.

"Until further notice, the practice will push through as planned," said Uichico, who visits Jacobs daily.

Uichico said doctors attributed Jacobs' stroke to the pressures brought on by forming the RP Team.

"It's not really stress but you have to understand there's a lot of pressure on planning the competitiveness of the national team," said Uichico.

With Uichico now at the helm, he will have to adjust with the conduct of the tryouts, a training program perfectly laid out by Jacobs.

"I have to adjust with the things being done in the tryouts. At that, I have to consult Allan Caidic and Eric Altamirano about it," he said.

Altamirano, head coach of Purefoods, and Caidic of Barangay Ginebra conducted the initial week-long tryouts last month.

Meanwhile, San Miguel Beer has dangled a two-year deal worth P12 million to franchise player Danny Seigle.

Uichico said Seigle will most likely sign the contract upon his return from the United States. *June Navarro*

13th Andrada Cup starts

BOYS' 18-under seventh seed Mark Louie Jorolan plays Yamashita So and No. 8 Miguel Narvaez faces Kennedy David Lee today at the start of the 13th Andrada Cup Age Group Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Narvaez is also seeing action in the boys' 16-under division where he will meet No. 3 Nestor Celestino Jr. in the first round.

Other matches pit No. 4 Michael Basco against Mauric Lao, No. 5 Boris Jan Chavez against Jordan Echague, No. 6 Arithmetico Lim against Kyle Dandan, No. 7 Renz John de Villa against Bryan Dayleg and No. 8 Lawrence Magaway against Carlo Christian Canlas.

Also scheduled are the first-round matches in the boys' 14-under, 12-under and unisex 10-under divisions in this Group 2 event held in honor of Philta president Salvador Andrada. All winners will receive 120 points.

Playing in the girls' 18-under first round are Anna Isabel Soriano against April Shima, Karen Reyes against Anna Martinez, Krissy Marie Alina against Sherry Rose Ong, Jeannette Bumgarner against Kristel Samala, Bien Zoleta against Virginia Uy, Meg Salvacion against Kris Lorraine Gumban, and Marian Salvacion against Anna Denise Culaba.

In the girls' 16-under class, Jacqueline battles Stephanie Tecson, Anna Pascual plays Isobelle Culaba, Monica Obrencia tangles with Melissa Orteza and Nozomi Fukushina meets Anna Isabel Soriano.

MBA, NBN 4 sign pact for 1 season

THE METROPOLITAN Basketball Association and the National Broadcasting Network have signed a one-year pact making the government channel the MBA's new television carrier in the league's fifth season.

MBA president and chair Santi Araneta of LBC Batangas said NBN's Mia Concio, Bobby Arias and Jose Isabelo signed the pact.

"Its already a done deal," said Araneta, whose Blades topped the 2001 MBA season. "MBA games during weekends starting April will be aired live on NBN 4."

NBN 4 will televise MBA matches every Saturday from 6 to 11 p.m. and during Sundays from 1 to 6 p.m. Araneta said NBN 4 is still studying whether to include or not weekday games on their schedule.

Ramon Tuason, league director for business and marketing, said NBN's partnership with the MBA is a welcome development after ABS-CBN ended its support after four seasons.

"The contract will last 37 weeks starting in April and is extendable," said Tuason. "But marketing campaigns and the promotion of the MBA will definitely start in February so as to heighten awareness."

The league's current members are LBC Batangas, Negros, Cebuana Lhuillier, a TPG-bankrolled Mindanao team, Pampanga and recently accepted Olongapo.

Applicants include Rizal, Pasig, Taguig and Laoag.

Mojal rules Mini 4WD

BENNY Mojal of Wowow-Laguna ruled the final race of the Wowow Mini-4WD tournament held recently at the GameworX inside the Festival Supermall at Filinvest in Alabang Muntinlupa City.

Mojal bagged the overall title in the monthly race and the prize of P10,000 in the event sponsored by Wowow-Laguna and GameworX Inc.

Mojal also joined the President's Cup last month but settled only for the 2nd-runner-up title. Mojal's teammate Darwin Santiago clinched the overall crown and the first-runner-up title with his five Tamiya entries.

John Hilario of Smiley-Cavite Alliance salvaged first runner-up honors to pocket P3,000 while teammate Jesse Castillo settled for the second-runner-up to bring home the P2,000 prize that went with it.

GameworX president Jesus "Jun" Avecilla promised a more exciting tournament this year after the awarding ceremonies.

PBL resumes with doubleheader

STANDINGS	W	L
ICTSI	7	3
Shark	7	4
Blu	7	4
Welcoat	7	4
Kutitap	5	6
Ana	4	7
Pioneer	4	7
Montaña	3	9

Games Today

2 p.m.—Kutitap Toothpaste vs. Welcoat

4 p.m.—Blu Detergent vs. ICTSI-De La Salle

ICTSI-La Salle and Welcoat Paints gun for crucial victories that will beef up chances for the two automatic semifinals berths as the 2001 PBL Challenge Cup resumes today at the Makati Coliseum.

ICTSI-La Salle collides with Blu Detergent in the main encounter at 4 while Welcoat Paints clashes with Kutitap Toothpaste at 2 p.m.

The ICTSI Archers, 7-3, are hoping to bounce back from a 55-59 setback to Shark as they aim to reassert their 65-54 triumph over the Detergent Kings last Dec. 1.

"We're just one win away from the big pack. So we really needed this one to keep the top spot since we're still facing the giant teams in our coming games," said ICTSI-La Salle coach Franz Pumaren.

But if they lose, Blu and Welcoat could wrest the leadership. The Detergent Kings and the Paint Masters are in a three-way tie for second with idle defending champion Shark Energy Drink toting 7-4 records and came off from big victories.

SPORTSWATCH

Tennis polls: 'David vs Goliath'

THE MUCH-AWAITED elections for the Philippine Tennis Association regional vice presidents – an event that will determine whether Philta president Buddy Andrada can prolong his 14-year reign – will be held today all over the country. Andrada was set to fly to Iloilo today to monitor the polls where tennis clubs cast their votes for representatives of the regions, who will then elect the Philta president next year. Andrada's main rival Jovy Mamawal of the Children's Tennis Worskshop described the elections as "a battle between David and Goliath," citing the edge carried by candidates identified with Andrada. "For member clubs casting their votes tomorrow (today), please be aware that what you will write in the ballots could either be Philippine tennis' new lease on life or its death warrant," said Mamawal.

PSA Awards Night cites amputee

AN amputee, whose tale of courage earned him a special place in the world of the disabled, will join the honor roll of sports heroes who will be feted by the country's oldest news organization during the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) Annual Awards Jan. 11 at the Holiday Inn. Arnold Balais, 32, took Southeast Asia by storm by winning the gold in the 200-m freestyle in a new Far East and South Pacific Games record of 2:45.06 and the bronze medals in five other swimming events in the first ASEAN Para Games held Oct. 23-30 in Malaysia. These feats earned him the PSA citation as the Most Outstanding Athlete with disability, becoming the second athlete from the Philippine Sports Association for the Differently Abled (Philspada) to be honored by the 52-year-old organization.

Mandaluyong derby draws 75 entries

SOME 75 participants are seeing action in the Mandaluyong 9-Cock International Derby on Jan. 8, 10 and 12 at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo. The elimination round (2-cock) on Tuesday will start at 4 p.m., according to businessman-sportsman Vic Yu who is hosting the event with the full support of the United Cockers Association of the Philippines (Ucap). For other inquiries, call 534-4110, 531-4003, 531-4005 and 535-2341.

Parañaque mayor hosts cockfest

COCKFIGHTING aficionados will compete for charity today in the Mayor's 4-Cock Derby today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City. Hosted by Parañaque City Mayor Joey P. Marquez and assisted by Gerry Santiago and Danny Rodriguez, the derby is for the benefit of the Boy Scout of the Philippines-Parañaque City Council headed by First Vice President Salvador Bondoc. Among the entries include Rudy Salud, Dennis del Rosario and some members of the Galleros de Manila. Promoter Danny "Showdown" Ty said weights between 1.8 kg and 2.4 kg must be submitted today, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Hornets by 12

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—Baron Davis had 28 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds to lead the Charlotte Hornets to a 114-102 victory over the Golden State Warriors on a cold, snowy night before the smallest crowd in franchise history.

NBA RESULTS

Charlotte 114, Golden State 102; New York 108, Dallas 101, OT; Houston 99, Detroit 97. AP

Miami wins Rose Bowl

THE MIAMI Hurricanes beat the Nebraska Cornhuskers yesterday, 37-14, to win the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

Weir resets mark; Woods 5 behind

WEIR

KAPALUA, Hawaii—The last time Mike Weir played on the PGA Tour, he was hitting his irons close to the flag on his way to victory in the Tour Championship. Two months later, only the scenery has changed.

Tiger Woods took an adventurous route along Kapalua, but straightened himself out with two eagles and finished with a 68.

In the best ball-striking round of his career, Weir tied the Plantation Course record with a 10-under-par 63 yesterday and built a three-stroke lead in the first round of the season-opening Mercedes Championships.

"That was way above my expectations," Weir said, who spent much of December skiing.

Frank Lickliter, one of nine players making their debuts in the winners-only tournament, holed out from 144 yards (meters) with an 8-iron after hitting into a hazard for an unusual birdie, which carried him to a 66.

David Duval, who first set the course record two years ago, had a 67 and was joined by Cameron Beckman, Chris DiMarco and Scott Verplank.

With only a stiff breeze blowing off the coast of Maui, Woods figured someone would shoot about 65.

"Weirsy happened to go lower. That's good for him," Woods said. "He's been playing well and he's going to be hard to catch."

The start of the season was still a relaxing day for some. Duval was anxious to get in front of a television to watch the Rose Bowl, and he's counting the days before he can hit the slopes in Sun Valley - Monday morning. In between, he posted a 67.

Weir wasn't sure what to think of his round.

While the 10-under 63 tied his lowest career round in relation to par, it could have been so much better.

He three-putted for par on No. 5 and missed four putts inside 10 feet (3 meters) on the back nine. So pure were his irons that his longest birdie putt he made was 7 (2 meters) feet on the 15th.

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METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

TRO to halt Manila demolitions still in effect, says judge

BY JEROME ANING

"THE MAYOR can say anything he wants. But we judges are not politicians."

This was how Manila Regional Trial Court Judge Wilfredo Reyes reacted yesterday to Mayor Lito Atienza's accusations that the judge committed "judicial malpractice" when he issued a temporary restraining order in favor of sidewalk vendors whom City Hall wants to drive away from a street in Divisoria.

The TRO is still in effect, the judge said.

In yesterday's hearing, the city government lawyers led by City Legal Officer Melchor Monsod asked the judge to withdraw the TRO, and filed a motion for reconsideration to this effect.

But the judge rejected the motion yesterday for "the same reasons" he cited in the Dec. 20 TRO.

In the 6-page TRO, Judge Reyes said he is convinced that "great or irreparable injury" will happen to the vendors if the status quo was not maintained.

This led city government's lawyers to ask Reyes to inhibit himself from further hearing the case, saying the judge has "clearly pre-judged" the case.

The vendors' counsel responded by demanding that Atienza be cited for contempt of court because he proceeded with the demolition of the vendors' stalls on Ilaya Street in Divisoria.

Atienza, who described the vendors' lawsuit and the TRO as "legal gobbledygook," yesterday told reporters that the operations in Divisoria will continue until the area is clear of illegal vendors.

The Unified Vendors Association on Ilaya, led by Joel Bangit, sought a TRO on Dec. 5 to stop the clearing operations, and sued the mayor, the chief of the Manila Hawkers Office and the Binondo police station commander.

UVA described City Hall's vending ban on Ilaya and its refusal to give them business permits as "discriminatory, oppressive, arbitrary, whimsical, capricious, and vindictive exercise of power and authority."

In an interview in his chambers at the RTC Branch 36 courtroom in Port Area, Manila Judge Reyes refused to comment on Atienza's accusations.

"I don't have to say anything, my order will speak for itself," Reyes told the INQUIRER.

He said that in his 19 years as judge, he has always been "very careful" in issuing TROs and when he did so, they were "in accordance with the law."

"The mayor can say anything he wants; we judges are not politicians and we don't seek media mileage," the judge said. "We say our statements in court, we don't go to the press."

Reyes said both parties should argue their case before him in court.

During the trial, the judge silently read copies of two press statements issued by the Office of the Mayor, where Atienza denounced the TRO.

Reyes also vehemently denied a radio anchor's comment in a morning program, where the latter hinted that the judge was paid to issue the TRO.

"This court's TROs are not for sale," Reyes said.

City Legal Officer Monsod told the court that he "does not have anything to do" with the press releases.

Monsod added the newspaper reports on the controversy should not be readily believed.

Reyes gave Monsod until Monday to file a formal motion asking for his inhibition. The TRO will be technically in effect until the motion is resolved.

UVA lawyer Jim Baliad said he will ask the Court to cite Atienza and other city and police officials for contempt of court because of the ongoing demolitions on Ilaya.

The judge asked Baliad to formalize his motion and present it after the issue of inhibition has been resolved.

In his weekly press conference at city hall, Atienza said he does not mind going to jail for defying the TRO.

"I'm ready to go to jail; but maybe this judge is the one who will be jailed," Atienza said.

The mayor insisted he will continue to implement the law, which states that streets and sidewalks are beyond the commerce of man.

He said he would rather go to jail "than turn my back on my responsibility of maintaining orderliness in the city."

Atienza, accompanied by city and police officials, led another clearing operation on Ilaya and neighboring Juan Luna Street and C.M. Recto Avenue, dismantling stalls and other illegal structures.

"We have to provide unfettered access to Divisoria to protect the interests of the legitimate vendors and traders, and continue to encourage shoppers to go to the area," the mayor said.

Atienza added that Divisoria's advantage of having cheap but high quality goods will be negated if the place is not easily accessible to shoppers.

Streets leading to Divisoria are often heavily congested because of the illegal stalls put up by vendors on the sidewalks and on the streets.

Delay in budget approval causes delay in services

BY AGNES E. DONATO

A POSSIBLE delay in the delivery of some services in Quezon City was seen, after the seemingly endless corrections in the proposed 2002 local budget caused delay in its approval.

A City Hall employee, who requested anonymity, said that the services that could be affected by the delay in the budget approval included maintenance and operations, garbage disposal and other special projects of the city government.

But salaries of City Hall employees would be given on time, the source said. He said that the City Council submitted an approved budget before it went on recess last Dec. 18. But it was not specified in the budget, which subjects have been amended, keeping the office of the city secretary from finalizing it.

The source added that the communication containing the adjustments sent by the Council was signed by only three of its members—councilors Elizabeth Delarmente, chair of the committee on appropriations; Jesus Suntay, majority floor leader; and Vincent Crisologo, minority floor leader.

"We will not finalize this budget without the amendments being discussed on the floor by the majority of the council members. Otherwise, we could be charged by any taxpayer with legislative piracy," the source said.

But the City Council is on recess until Jan. 22, calling the need for its members to hold a special session for the budget.

Once approved by the council, the budget still has to go through the Department of Budget and Management before it could be implemented.

"In fairness to the councilors, we do not blame them for the delay," the source said. "Most of them are just familiarizing themselves with the procedure of budget approval.

"Besides, the new administration must have different priorities, which the councilors might have overlooked when it passed the budget."

Bayan Muna asks DOLE to settle labor dispute in broadcast firm

BAYAN Muna Rep. Crispin Beltran has urged the Department of Labor and Employment to intervene on behalf of the 150 workers of ABS-CBN who are facing retrenchment as part of the firm's cost-cutting measures.

STO. TOMAS

Beltran said Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas should step in to stop the layoffs and resolve the labor dispute in the country's biggest broadcast station.

Beltran and the Kilusang Mayo Uno also expressed fears that the brewing labor controversy in ABS-CBN could serve as precedent for other media outfits.

The Lopez group has officially submitted its plan of action to cut down its 5,000-strong workforce by three percent and its operational costs in ABS-CBN by as much as P500 million to cushion the impact of its losses last year.

At least 29 employees have been given termination notices that will take effect on Jan. 27, even as the ABS-CBN employees union protests the retrenchment.

Blanche S. Rivera

WAZZZZUP ?
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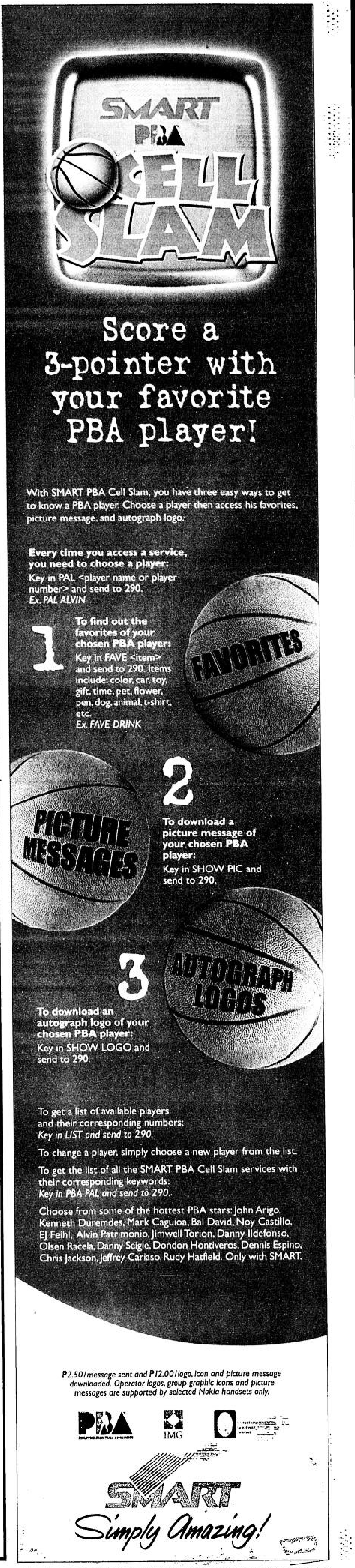

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Coup pals killed Cervantes

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SELF-STYLED Young Officers Union spokesperson Baron Alexander Cervantes, who was killed on New Year's Eve, was an impostor. His fake posturings have been exposed after his death.

He was not the Army captain which he claimed to be. He was not the member of the Philippine National Police that he also claimed to be. He was dismissed from the military when he was a lieutenant.

But Cervantes knew about the plan of some YOU members to stage a coup. Most probably he got wind of the plans from YOU insiders. Or some YOU members tried to recruit him to take part in a coup or destabilization plot against the government.

* * *

The coup pals, as the late Louie Beltran called them, did not keep their plans secret. Only in the Philippines!

YOU and the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan have been openly soliciting support from military officers and prominent civilians in destabilizing the Macapagal-Arroyo administration.

One of my close friends told me they tried to recruit him as a member of the civilian component of YOU and RAM in the destabilization efforts. He said that his friends were also approached.

My friend said among the active recruiters were retired Gen. Edgardo Abenina and his sidekick, Supt. Rafael Cardeno. At the time my friend was approached, Abenina was still chief of the Land Transportation Office. Abenina has since been replaced.

* * *

So, who could have done Cervantes in?

Only an idiot would not know the answer.

* * *

Retired Director General Roberto Lastimoso, former chief of the Philippine National Police, will take over as chief of the Land Transportation Office on Monday.

The LTO top post has been vacant for sometime after Abenina resigned.

It will be sweet vindication for Lastimoso who was fired as PNP chief because of the lies made up by then Chief Supt. Panfilo Lacson against him.

* * *

Lacson accused Lastimoso of coddling an alleged drug lord from Cebu City. Seeing through Lacson's lies, the Sandiganbayan dismissed the case against Lastimoso.

Lastimoso, who graduated from the Philippine Military Academy at a time when Lacson was still to enter it, suffered a great deal from the stigma of being called "coddler of drug lords."

Even when Lastimoso was already out of the PNP and looking for a job, Lacson kept hounding him.

By the way, Lastimoso is Spanish for "a pitiful man."

* * *

"Grabe ang ginawa sa akin ni **Lacson, Mistah!" Lastimoso said.**

The former PNP chief said that Lacson blocked his appointment as consultant to the Department of Energy. At the time, Lastimoso said he needed the job badly.

"But now that's water under the bridge. Everything's forgotten," said Lastimoso.

But will it be "water under the bridge" for Lacson? Watch out for the statement of the guy who kicks a fallen man, who uses words like "taratitat" in decent speech. The word, which means talkative, is found in the esoteric vocabulary of homosexuals.

* * *

To what extent can a judge, a member of the judicial branch of government, issue a temporary restraining order or injunction without infringing on the work of the executive branch?

When Olongapo City Regional Trial Court Judge Eliodoro G. Ubiadas issued an injunction (order) for Collector Billy Bibit to remain at his post at the Subic Bay customshouse, he was clearly interfering in the functions of the Bureau of Customs, an office within the executive branch.

Bibit has been ordered transferred to another customs post by his superiors. But he refuses to follow the order, and instead went to the court.

What business has the judge in revoking the reassignment order which is clearly a prerogative of top management?

* * *

When Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte asked his constituents not to use firecrackers and other pyrotechnics in celebrating New Year's Eve, city residents complied.

Duterte had said that criminal and subversive elements might take advantage of the merry-making noise to shoot at people or explode bombs in the city.

The result: only one firecracker-caused injury was reported.

When the government makes an effort to enjoin the citizens not to do something that might harm them, the citizens comply.

2 Bedans lose P1M to 'fraternity men'

By Philip C. Tubeza

TWO San Beda high school students on Thursday had on them about P1 million worth of jewelry, cell phones, credit cards, and other valuables.

The boys lost them all to five men who passed themselves off as fraternity members in Mendiola.

The two senior students, both aged 16, one a resident of Better Living Subdivision in Parañaque and the other of Sampaloc, lost a total of P1,038,050 worth of valuables.

The Better Living resident lost a white gold necklace with two gold pendants worth P800,000; five gold rings worth P205,000; an P8,000 watch, a Nokia 8310 worth P16,400; a P5,000 pair of sunglasses, a leather wallet with P800 in cash, a lighter, and an AIG credit card.

The other student lost a wallet worth P1,500; P350 in cash, a dark blue Jansport bag, with perfume and shirts inside.

The victims were with two other San Beda students, but the two did not lose anything.

They said the suspects introduced themselves as members of the Apo Fraternity.

They described the alleged "master" as about 30 to 40 years old, 5-foot-6 in height, dark complexioned, with short hair, and wearing a checkered green polo shirt and *maong* pants.

The others were aged between 20 and 40 years old and their height ranged from 5-foot-3 to 5-foot-8. The victims said two of the frat men were fat and dark complexioned. A third had dyed his hair blonde, and the last had a fair complexion.

Investigators said the robbers passed themselves off as fraternity members and confronted the students. The suspects allegedly accused the students of insulting their female friends.

The culprits then forced the helpless students to surrender their valuables.

The victims proceeded to the Western Police District's theft and robbery section about 5 p.m. Thursday.

Police said the suspects' modus operandi is common among petty criminals who prey on students in the University Belt.

Binay halts parking fee hike

By Alcuin Papa

MAKATI City Mayor Jejomar Binay yesterday ordered a halt on the increase of parking fees which was supposed to take effect this year.

Binay said he has ordered the board of the Makati Parking Authority (Mapa), the private firm in charge of some 1,700 parking slots in and around the Makati commercial business district, to immediately convene an emergency meeting and review the parking fee increases.

Until such a time that the Mapa board can justify the proposed hike, Binay said the increases will not take effect.

He added he is invoking his "moral authority" as mayor and head of the city government "to regulate and control their (Mapa) activities since their function is vested with public interest."

Binay is ex officio chair of the Mapa board.

In turn, Makati Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado said the city council will review an ordinance seeking a 15-percent share in the parking fees collected by Mapa, once it has been determined that government stands to gain from the increase.

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--Kevin Thomas,
LOS ANGELES TIMES
An official selection of this year's Telluride, Toronto and New York Film Festivals. Im Kwon Taek's CHUNHYANG, Korea's largest cinematic production ever. A four month shoot employing over 8,000 extras and some 12,000 costumesmade its world premiere in the main competition of the Cannes Film Festival 2000.
This epic tale of forbidden passion, devotion and the glorious triumph of love in adversity is set in 18th Century Korea and begins as Mongryong, the privileged son of the Governor of Namwon, falls in love with Chunhyang, the beautiful daughter of a proud former courtesan. Soon after they are married in secret, Mongryong is ordered to Seoul to finish his education. He leaves reluctantly and promises that once he finishes his schooling he will send for his beloved. But time passes, and a new, vindictive Governor is appointed in the province where Chunhyang lives. This new Governor pursues Chunhyang and when she refuses his advances, she is imprisoned and sentenced to death. Chunhyang's only hope for being saved is her faith in the promise Mongryong once made to her.

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Teachers seek ouster of Cavite schools head

MORE teachers and a group of students also denounced what they described as "the abusive ways" of the Cavite division school superintendent.

The complainants asked Cavite Gov. Ayong Maliksi to have the provincial school superintendent, Dr. Leonora Ignacio, investigated and if necessary removed from office, according to a statement from the governor's office.

Earlier, five teachers of the Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo High School in Imus wrote Maliksi accusing Ignacio of trying to cover up the case of another teacher whom they had sued for alleged grave threats.

The latest complainants are Sonia B. Taduran, former head teacher III of Bagbag National High School in Rosario town; Gloria E. Jaymalin of the Salawag Elementary School in Dasmariñas town; and students of the Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo National High School. The superintendent is now under investigation, according to the office of the governor. It said Ignacio was earlier suspended and transferred due to similar complaints.

In a letter to Maliksi, Taduran listed eight of Ignacio's alleged abuses, including the superintendent's inaction on the teachers' complaint of sexual harassment against Ignacio's driver. Taduran earlier sent a similar list to Education Secretary Raul Roco.

Taduran also alleged that the driver, whom she identified only as Biboy, would screen Ignacio's visitors at the latter's division office in Trece Martirez City, according to the statement from Maliksi's office.

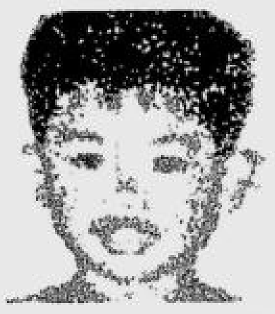
It also said Jaymalin, a 40-year-old mother of two, tearfully told Maliksi how Ignacio "has made my life a living hell since 1994." She submitted to the governor a 149-page documentation of her battle with Ignacio.

"If you sue (Ignacio)," the governor's office quoted Jaymalin as saying, "you get slapped with even more charges in court. That's why many teachers choose to remain silent although they have grievances against her."

Jaymalin said Ignacio and her cohorts once fabricated charges of falsification against her. She said the Department of Education, Culture and Sports and the Civil Service Commission cleared her, and the latter issued a return-to-work order, but the superintendent's allies brought the case to a court in Imus.

She said masked men with long guns once barged into her home but she refused to go with them. Another time, three policemen picked her up while she was teaching and brought her to Camp Pantaleon Garcia in Imus, she said.

Lost boy



JOHN Henrex Peralta, 4, of 55-C Interior-1, Block 13, Lot 22, Banahaw Street in Barangay San Martin De Porres, Cubao, Quezon City, was wearing dark blue T-shirt with collar, faded denim short pants, and high-top white rubber shoes when he disappeared last Dec. 23 at about 12 p.m. in the vicinity of Aurora Boulevard and Stella Maris College on Cambridge Street in Cubao, Quezon City. Anyone who might have found him and is now caring for him may contact the police or the following telephone/cellphone numbers: 0916-3897330, 02940-2372, 021126765, 0919-4917762, or 09198663192.

METROBRIEFS

Under fire

THE NATIONAL Police Commission yesterday filed administrative cases against SPO4 Pedrito Laut of the Traffic Management Group (TMG), SPO1 Aurelio Beltran assigned to Sta. Ignacia, Tarlac and PO3 Raymundo Rahco assigned to Poblacion Pardo, Cebu, for allegedly firing their service firearms during the New Year celebrations. If found guilty, the four faces suspension or dishonorable discharge from service without benefits, authorities said. Also arrested for firing his .45 service firearm during the New Year celebrations was Air Force Sgt. Oscar Tangara of CAA Compound, Las Piñas. Napolcom Vice Chair Rogelio Pureza ordered lawyer Antonio Salazar, director of the agency's Investigation, Monitoring and Inspection Service (IMIS), to expedite the cases against the four policemen "to serve as an example to erring policemen." Pureza also appealed to the public to report to his office other law enforcers who discharged their guns last New Year. "Please do not be afraid to testify against these policemen," said Pureza. *Alcuin Papa*

Shot dead

CASHIER Danilo Faustino, 32, never got to the bank to deposit about P159,000 in earnings of the Petron gas station at the corner of Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue and Dian Street in Barangay Palanan, Makati City, where he worked. Faustino died while being treated at the Makati Medical Center for a gunshot wound in the chest after holdup men on board a motorcycle shot him on Thursday on his way to the bank, police said. The suspects are still at large, police said. *Alcuin Papa*

Dog lovers howl foul

"UNREASONABLE" was how animal rights advocate Tina Testa described Manila councilor Julio Logarta Jr.'s proposal for a dog-tagging campaign to curb the rising population of stray canines in the city. Testa, who is with the Philippine Animal Welfare Society, said the legal and more humane way to deal with strays is to have them rounded up and auctioned off, or have them neutered or spayed. Logarta recently proposed that all dogs be registered with the city health department, and that owners and keepers pay P150 per canine as registration fee. The animals will be given dog tags, which they will have to wear at all times. He also wants to give city residents the right to declare as "nuisance" any dog in their neighborhood that is noisy, unfriendly, undisciplined or deformed. He also wants to give barangay officials the authority to seize that dog. The proposal will also entitle households to keep only two dogs at a time. But Testa, who keeps seven dogs in her Quiapo residence, said Logarta's measure is "obviously a money-making scheme." She said dog owners and keepers will not get anything in return from the city government, such as checkups and anti-rabies shots. Testa said no law could dictate how many dogs a person can keep. As long as he has the means to raise the dogs and train them, he must not be barred from owning more, she said. *Jerome Aning*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, January 5, 2002
Week Before Epiphany

1st Reading: *1 Jn 3:11-21*
Gospel: *Jn 1:43-51*

Jesus decided to set off for Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Philip was from Bethsaida, the town of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found the one that Moses wrote about in the Law, and the prophets as well: he is Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth."

Nathanael replied, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming, he said of him, "Here comes an Israelite, a true one; there is nothing false in him." Nathanael asked him, "How do you know me?" And Jesus said to him, "Before Philip called you, you were under the fig tree and I saw you."

Nathanael answered, "Master, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" But Jesus replied, "You believe because I said: 'I saw you under the fig tree.' But you will see greater things than that.

Truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Commentary

These are days of invitation: "Follow me. Come to know me anew. Come and see." How shall we follow Jesus? The fist reading tells us—find ways to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. Do not close our hearts to those in need, but let our love be real and active. Jesus promised Nathanael a few surprises, for the Spirit's power at work in us is able to do far more than we can ask for or even imagine. There are surprises and graces waiting for us in this year of 2002 as we commit ourselves to a journey of faith, prayer and service.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES)—Evident premeditation—The elements of evident premeditation must be established with equal certainty and clarity as the criminal act itself before it can be appreciated as a qualifying circumstance. These elements are: (1) the time when the accused determined to commit the crime; (2) an overt act manifestly indicating that they clung to their determination to commit the crime; and (3) a sufficient lapse of time between the decision to commit the crime and the execution thereof to allow the accused to reflect upon the consequence of their act. The essence, therefore, of evident premeditation is that the execution of the criminal act is preceded by cool thought and reflecting upon the resolution to carry out the criminal intent within a space of time sufficient to arrive at a calm judgment. All the elements of evidence premeditation are met in this case. All the acts demonstrate that the criminal intent had been harbored in dark reflection and calculation for more than two weeks, where the malefactors had every opportunity to abandon it but did not do so. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Gonzaga-Reyes, Third Division, People v. Uganap, G.R. No. 130605, June 19, 2001]

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Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
4	4 FATHERS
5	BAGONG BUWAN

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	4 FATHERS

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	TATARIN

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	TATARIN
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	4 FATHERS

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	BAGONG BUWAN
2 (DTS)	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	HUBOG
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	HUBOG
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	YAMASHITA
4	ROCKSTAR

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4 (DTS EX)	BAHAY NI LOLA

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

PREMIERE CINEMA THX

NOW SHOWING

UNIQUE CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE

That's What Showing At Ayala Cinemas

CMG INTERNATIONAL
Mile Long Compound, Amorsolo cor. Dela Rosa St. Makati City
Tel. No.: 700-8314 to 18
E-Mail: premierethx@asia.com
For VIP, Gold, Silver membership, call: 759-3162 to 66
For reservations, call: 751-2010 to 13

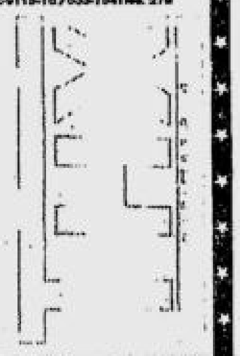
ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

State-Of-The-Art-Cinemas

NOW SHOWING

e-mail: hlc@netasia-mnl.net
http://www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA 632-9115-16 / 633-7941 loc. 278



1	LORD OF THE RING
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	GLASS HOUSE
4	YAMASHITA
5	LORD OF THE RING
6	ON THE LINE
7	BATANG LANSANGAN
8	BAHAY NI LOLA
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

ERMITA 536-7809 TO 12

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	YAMASHITA
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	GLASS HOUSE
5	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
6	LORD OF THE RING
7	ON THE LINE

METRO EAST 632-9115-16 / 633-7641

1	HUBOG
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	LORD OF THE RING
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BATANG LANSANGAN
7	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
8	BAHAY NI LOLA

NOVALICHES 936-3229 to 31

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	ON THE LINE
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	BAGONG BUWAN
7	BATANG LANSANGAN
8	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

IMUS (046) 471-8188

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA
4	ON THE LINE
5	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
6	BATANG LANSANGAN

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 / 0458

1	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	THE SCORE
5	ROCKSTAR
6	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

ILOILO (033) 330-8077 / 8070

1	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	TATARIN
6	SUMMER CATCH

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	YAMASHITA
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	BAHAY NI LOLA
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	BAGONG BUWAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	HUBOG
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	ON THE LINE
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	DOS EKIS / WILD SIDE
ODEON	LORD OF THE RINGS
ODEON-2	HUBOG
ROBEN	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	KNIGHT'S TAIL / THE BODY
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
REMAR	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
REMAR-2	HUBOG
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
B	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
C	HUBOG
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED
CINEMA-2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-2	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
CINEMA-3	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-6	HUBOG
CINEMA-7	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-8	TATARIN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-12	ON THE LINE
CINEMA-14	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-15	YAMASHITA
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	ON THE LINE
CINEMA-2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-4	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-5	THE GLASS HOUSE
CINEMA-6	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

Airport cabbies told to dress 'white'

TAXI drivers plying airport routes will soon be required to wear the standard white polo uniform and have their identity cards conspicuously displayed on their cabs.

Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon said airport authorities will also monitor the cabbies and require them to submit their names and destinations to watchmen whenever they pick up passengers at the airport.

"This way, we will be able to monitor who among our taxi drivers are abusive and who among them should be lauded for giving quality service," Gordon said.

—By N. Bordadora

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR 4173668

1	BATANG LANSANGAN
2	ON THE LINE
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	YAMASHITA
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	HUBOG
8	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

SM CENTERPOINT 7149522 - 7161416

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
5	LORD OF THE RINGS
6	BATANG LANSANGAN
7	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	ON THE LINE
9	YAMASHITA
10	TATARIN

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9350749

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	HUBOG
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	YAMASHITA
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	HARRY POTTER
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	TATARIN
11	ON THE LINE
12	BATANG LANSANGAN

SM CITY MANILA 5239240

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	GLASS HOUSE
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	ON THE LINE
5	YAMASHITA
6	LORD OF THE RINGS
7	HUBOG
8	BATANG LANSANGAN
9	LORD OF THE RINGS
10	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
11	TATARIN
12	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM MEGAMALL 6331901 • 6329401

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	GLASS HOUSE
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	ON THE LINE
5	YAMASHITA
6	TATARIN
7	HUBOG
8	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	LORD OF THE RINGS
11	BATANG LANSANGAN
12	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM TUTUBAN 2514302

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	BATANG LANSANGAN

DIGITAL dts SOUND — DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9295452

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	GLASS HOUSE
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	YAMASHITA
5	ON THE LINE
6	BAGONG BUWAN
7	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	LORD OF THE RINGS
9	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
10	HUBOG
11	BATANG LANSANGAN
12	TATARIN

SM SOUTHMALL 8066088 • 8066782

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	ON THE LINE
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	TATARIN
6	HUBOG
7	BAGONG BUWAN
8	LORD OF THE RINGS
9	YAMASHITA
10	BATANG LANSANGAN

SM GUADALUPE COMM'L 8820905

1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	TATARIN
3	LORD OF THE RINGS

SM CEBU 2313876

1	SUMMER CATCH
2	MUSKETEER
3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	ON THE LINE
6	HUBOG
7	4 FATHERS

SM ILOILO 3209422

1	HUBOG
2	CLOSED
3	SUMMER CATCH
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	CLOSED
8	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

SM PAMPANGA 7128015

1	ON THE LINE
2	YAMASHITA
3	TATARIN
4	BATANG LANSANGAN
5	HUBOG
6	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM SUCAT 8294975

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	ON THE LINE
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	YAMASHITA

SM DAVAO

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	ON THE LINE
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
6	SUMMER CATCH

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

NOW SHOWING

MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED

MANHATTAN ASIA FILMS, INC.

Joko Diaz *Bobby Andrews*
Sunshine Dizon *Joanna Gonzales*
and
Shaina Magdayao

"Mga Batang Lansangan... Ngayon"

PCSO

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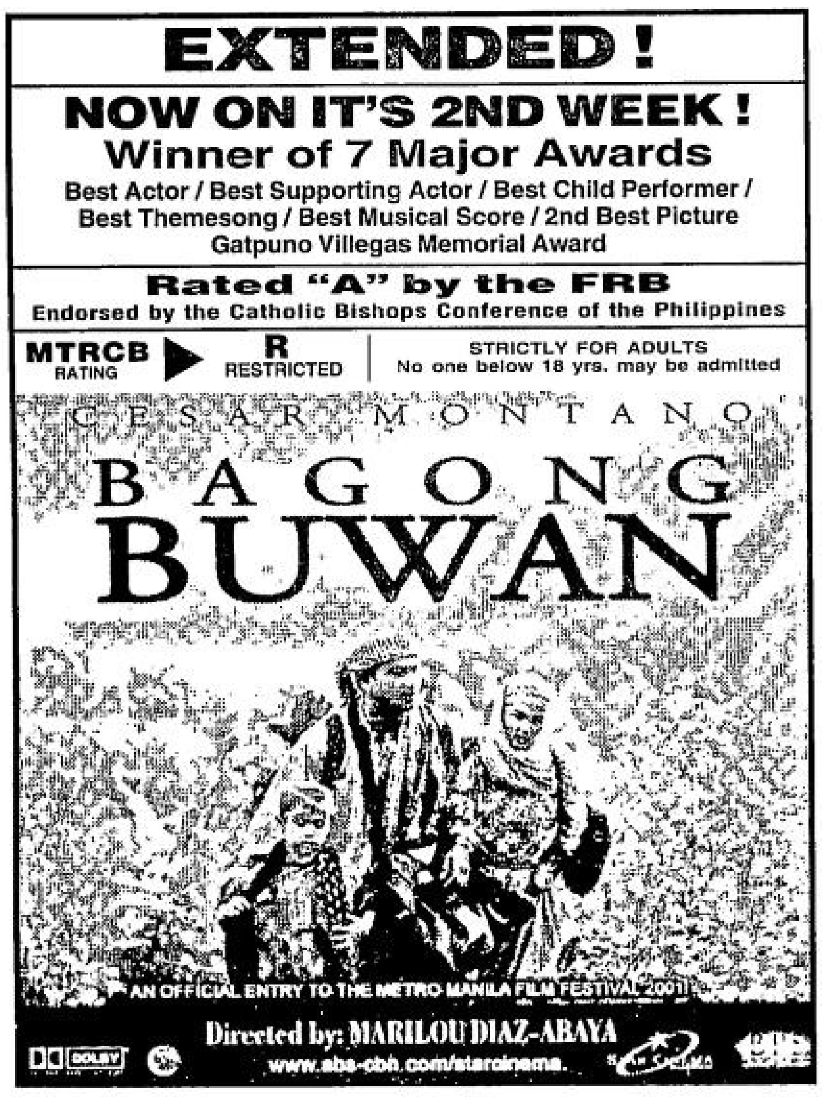
SKIN CARE & PERMANENT COSMETICS CORPORATION
Aesthetic Center

Red Ribbon Bakeshop

create
splash cologne
In three floral scents: PEACE, LOVE and HAPPINESS



EXTENDED !

NOW ON IT'S 2ND WEEK !
Winner of 7 Major Awards
Best Actor / Best Supporting Actor / Best Child Performer / Best Themesong / Best Musical Score / 2nd Best Picture
Gatpuno Villegas Memorial Award

Rated "A" by the FRB
Endorsed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines

MTRCB RATING ▶ R RESTRICTED | STRICTLY FOR ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted

CESAR MONTANO
BAGONG BUWAN

AN OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2001
Directed by: MARILOU DIAZ-ABAYA
www.abs-cbn.com/starcinema.

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

ON THE LINE - GP 11:25, 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45, 9:50	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 1:00, 4:30, 8:00, 11:20	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 11:05, 2:35, 6:05, 9:35
LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 10:20, 1:50, 5:20, 8:50	GLASS HOUSE - P 13 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:30	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 11:50, 3:20, 6:50, 10:20

Matinee, P80, Mon.-Fri.,11:00 am to 4:45 pm Screenings, Free Seating.

WINNERS ALL!

METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL
BEST PICTURE
WINNER OF 11 FESTIVAL AWARDS

YAMASHITA

MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED

MAQ PRODUCTIONS

HUBOG

BEST ACTRESS
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

MTRCB RATING ▶ R Restricted | STRICTLY FOR ADULTS No one below 18yrs. may be admitted

GOOD HARVEST PRODUCTIONS

BAHAY NI LOLA

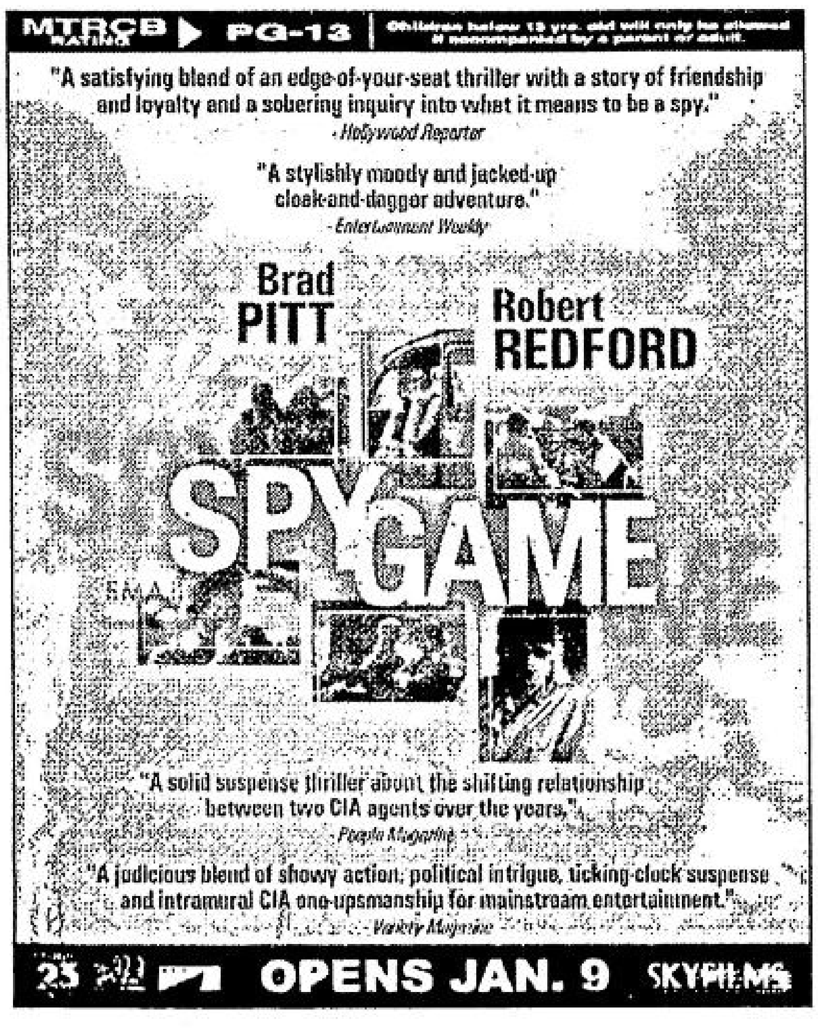
BIG BOX-OFFICE HIT

MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED

REGAL ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

Products of over
40 years of
filmmaking
experience.
MARAMING
SALAMAT PO!

Kodak
MOTION PICTURE FILM



MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

"A satisfying blend of an edge-of-your-seat thriller with a story of friendship and loyalty and a sobering inquiry into what it means to be a spy."
- Hollywood Reporter

"A stylishly moody and jacked-up cloak-and-dagger adventure."
- Entertainment Weekly

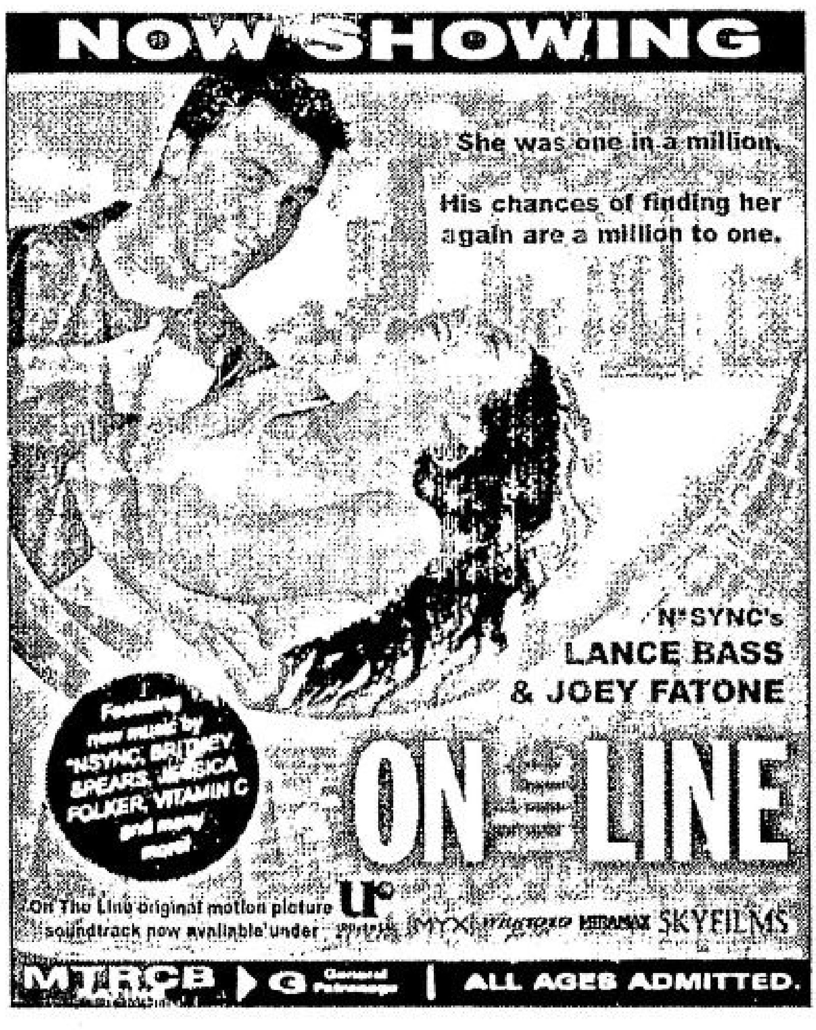
Brad PITT
Robert REDFORD

SPY GAME

"A solid suspense thriller about the shifting relationship between two CIA agents over the years."
- People Magazine

"A judicious blend of showy action, political intrigue, ticking-clock suspense and intramural CIA one-upsmanship for mainstream entertainment."
- Variety Magazine

OPENS JAN. 9 SKYFILMS



NOW SHOWING

She was one in a million.

His chances of finding her again are a million to one.

N*SYNC's
LANCE BASS
& JOEY FATONE

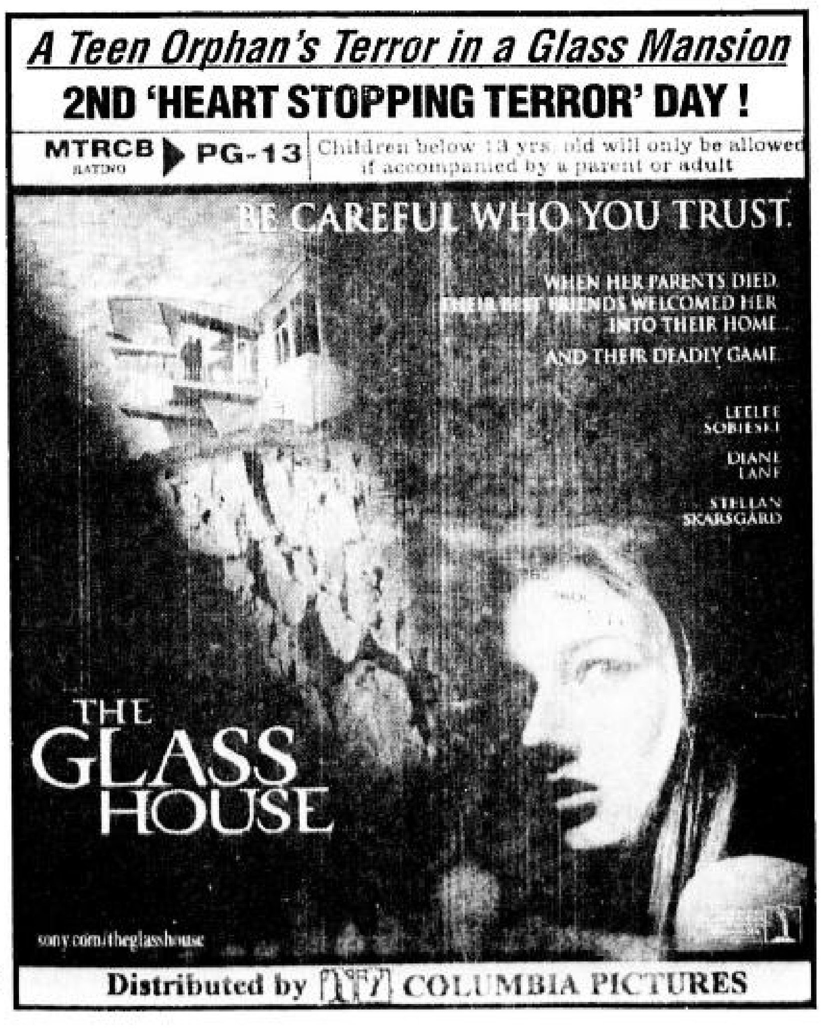
Featuring new music by *NSYNC, BRITNEY SPEARS, JESSICA FOLKER, VITAMIN C and many more!

ON THE LINE

On The Line original motion picture soundtrack now available under

MYX SKYFILMS

MTRCB ▶ G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED.



A Teen Orphan's Terror in a Glass Mansion
2ND 'HEART STOPPING TERROR' DAY !

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

BE CAREFUL WHO YOU TRUST.

WHEN HER PARENTS DIED, THEIR BEST FRIENDS WELCOMED HER INTO THEIR HOME...
AND THEIR DEADLY GAME.

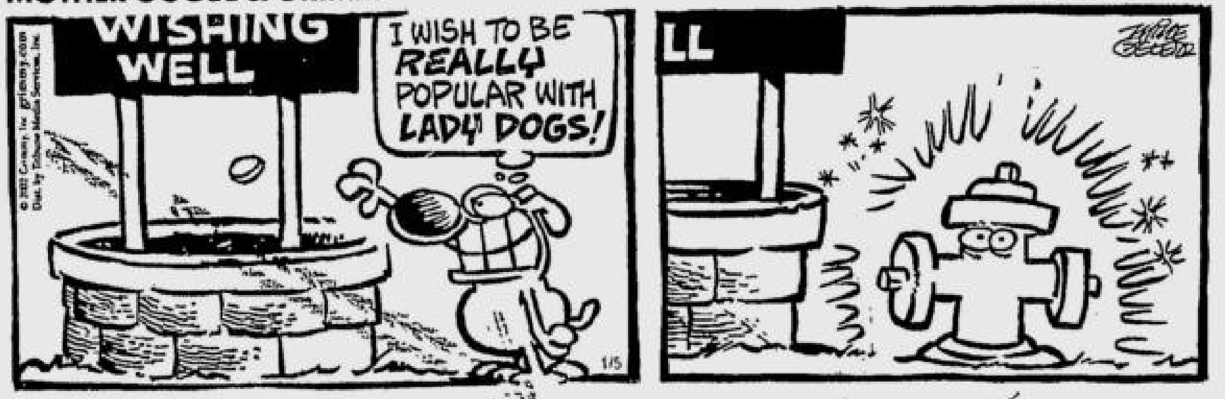
LEELEE SOBIESKI
DIANE LANE
STELLAN SKARSGARD

THE GLASS HOUSE

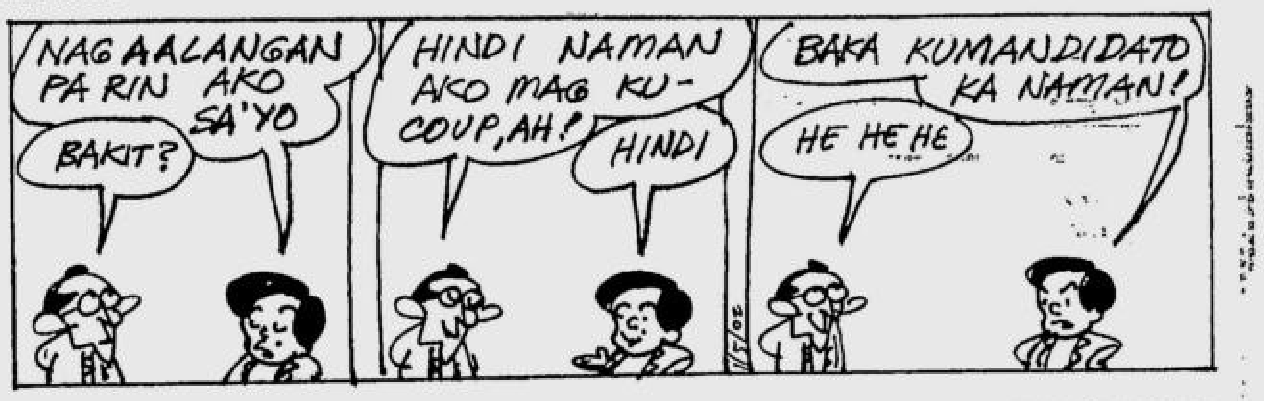
sony.com/theglasshouse

Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

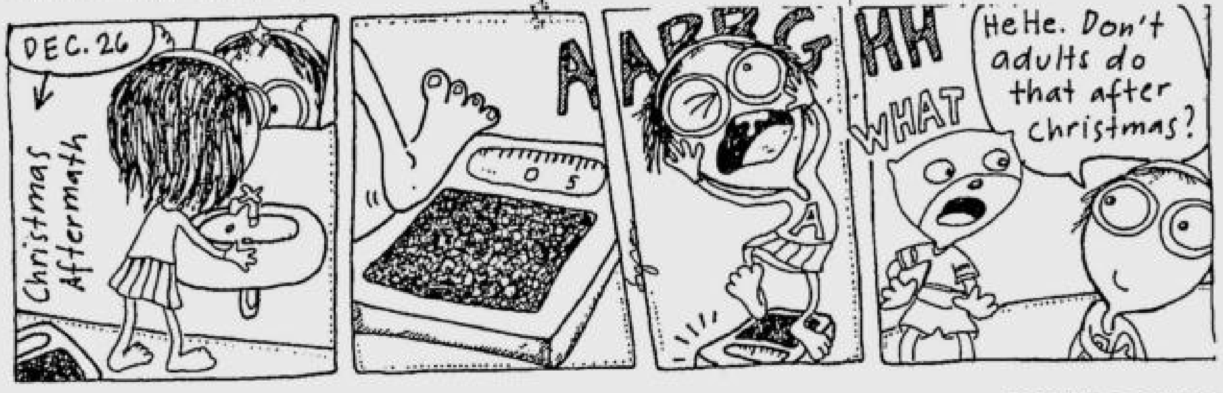
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM
BY MIKE PETERS


WISHING WELL
I WISH TO BE REALLY POPULAR WITH LADY DOGS!
1/5
LL

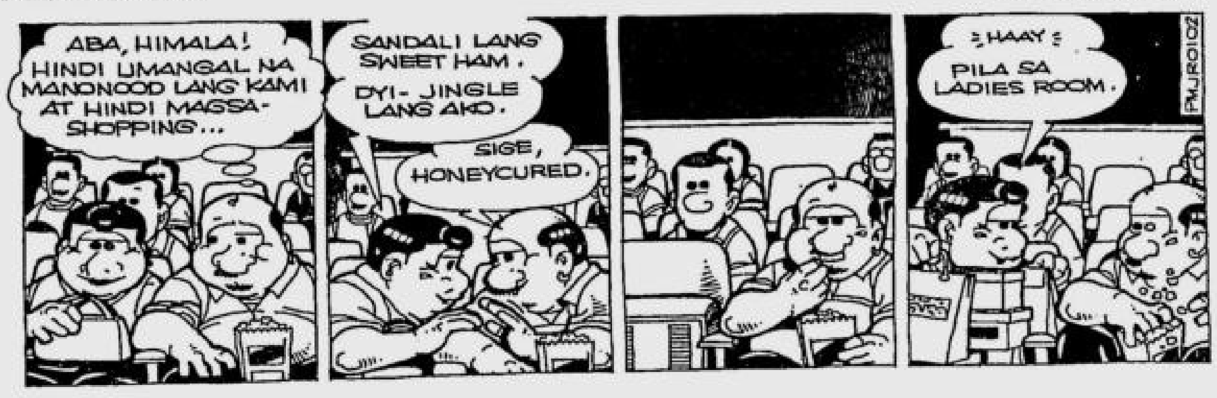
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


NAG AALANGAN PA RIN AKO SA'YO
BAKIT?
HINDI NAMAN AKO MAG KU-COUP, AH!
HINDI
BAKA KUMANDIDATO KA NAMAN!
HE HE HE
1/5/02

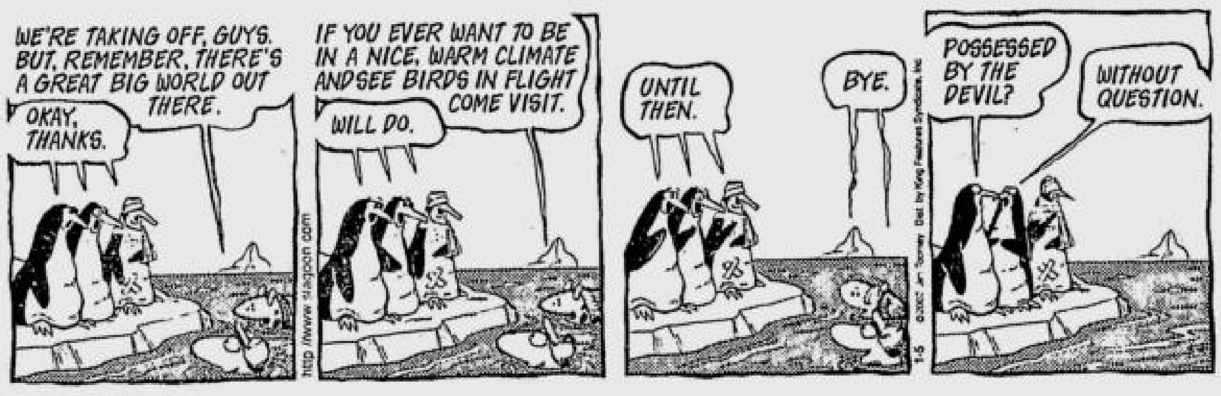
ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DEC. 26
Christmas Aftermath
AARRGHH
WHAT
HeHe. Don't adults do that after christmas?

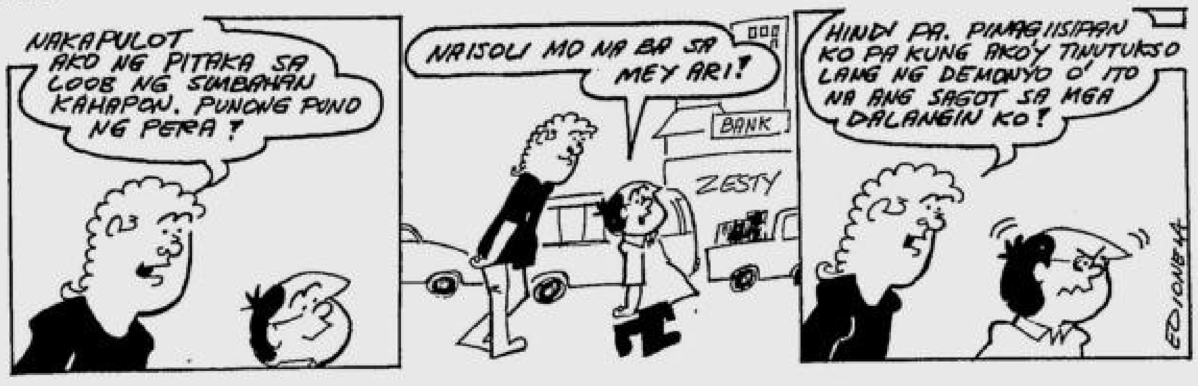
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


ABA, HIMALA! HINDI UMANGAL NA MANONOOD LANG KAMI AT HINDI MAGSA-SHOPPING...
SANDALI LANG SWEET HAM.
DYI- JINGLE LANG AKO.
SIGE, HONEYCURED.
HAAY
PILA SA LADIES ROOM.
PMJR0102

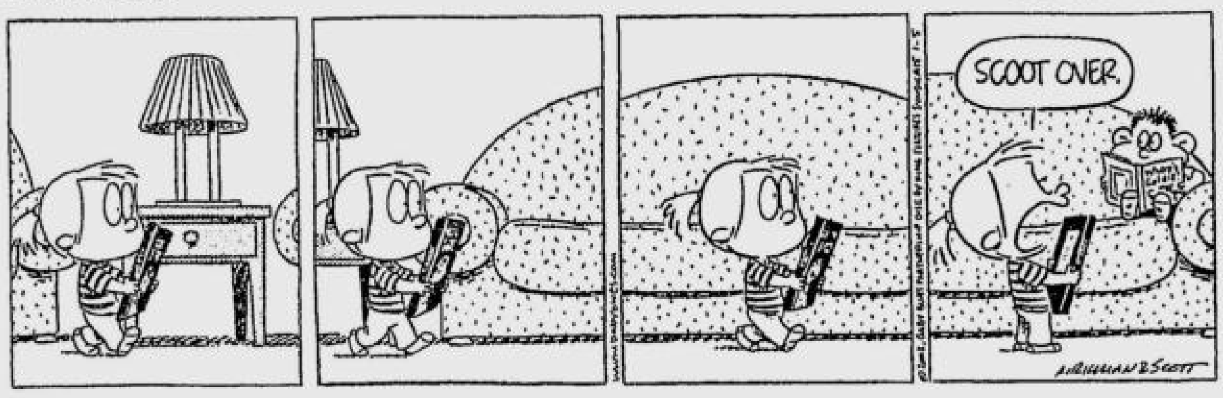
SHERMAN'S LAGOON
BY JIM TOOMEY


WE'RE TAKING OFF, GUYS. BUT, REMEMBER, THERE'S A GREAT BIG WORLD OUT THERE.
OKAY, THANKS.
IF YOU EVER WANT TO BE IN A NICE, WARM CLIMATE AND SEE BIRDS IN FLIGHT COME VISIT.
WILL DO.
UNTIL THEN.
BYE.
POSSESSED BY THE DEVIL?
WITHOUT QUESTION.
http://www.slagoon.com
1-5

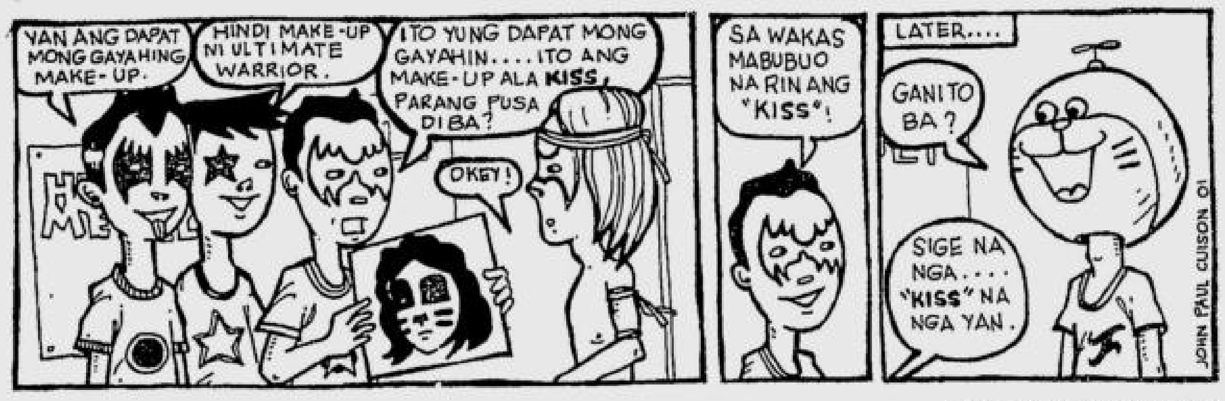
SIMO
BY EDGAR DIONELA


NAKAPULOT AKO NG PITAKA SA LOOB NG SIMBAHAN KAHAPON. PUNONG PUNO NG PERA!
NAISOLI MO NA BA SA MEY ARI?
BANK
ZESTY
HINDI PA. PINAG IISIPAN KO PA KUNG AKO'Y TINUTUKSO LANG NG DEMONYO O ITO NA ANG SAGOT SA MGA DALANGIN KO!
EDIONELA

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


SCOOT OVER.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

GARAPATA BLOOD
BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


YAN ANG DAPAT MONG GAYAHING MAKE-UP.
HINDI MAKE-UP NI ULTIMATE WARRIOR.
ITO YUNG DAPAT MONG GAYAHIN.... ITO ANG MAKE-UP ALA KISS, PARANG PUSA DIBA?
OKEY!
SA WAKAS MABUBUO NA RIN ANG "KISS"!
LATER....
GANITO BA?
SIGE NA NGA.... "KISS" NA NGA YAN.
JOHN PAUL CUISON 01

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Marilyn Manson, Walter Mondale, Robert Duvall, Diane Keaton

Happy Birthday: You will be competitive, outgoing and gung-ho about reaching your goals this year. You must decide what your needs are and take whatever action is necessary in order to attain all that you desire. Your numbers are 6, 17, 22, 29, 33, 41

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll be up for just about anything and eager to take on the world. Your competitive nature will put you into the limelight. You will be able to influence others with your outgoing personality.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You must consider what you are doing for a living and decide if you want to change your professional direction. You have lots to offer so see what your options are.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You'll be ready to take the plunge and try something new. Set your sights on what will challenge you and at the same time bring you extra cash.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Take it nice and easy, and if you find yourself facing obstacles back away and relax. Take time to think your actions through and you will be much happier with the outcome.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You must get out and do things with friends or relatives. Make plans to go to the theater or out for dinner. You have a lot to offer, so don't hold back.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Take the initiative. You will get ahead if you are ambitious. Your disciplined, well-thought out ideas will bring you the rewards you are looking for.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You will be emotional today. Don't let anyone push the wrong buttons. It's time to clear the air and move in a positive direction.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Something might not be too clear. Ask questions if you think that someone is hiding something from you. You have plenty to offer so don't let anyone make you feel unworthy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): The opportunity to do a little networking must be taken advantage of. The sooner you put yourself and your plans into motion the sooner you will reap the rewards.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): This is not the day to make changes. Sit back, relax and let others tend to important issues.

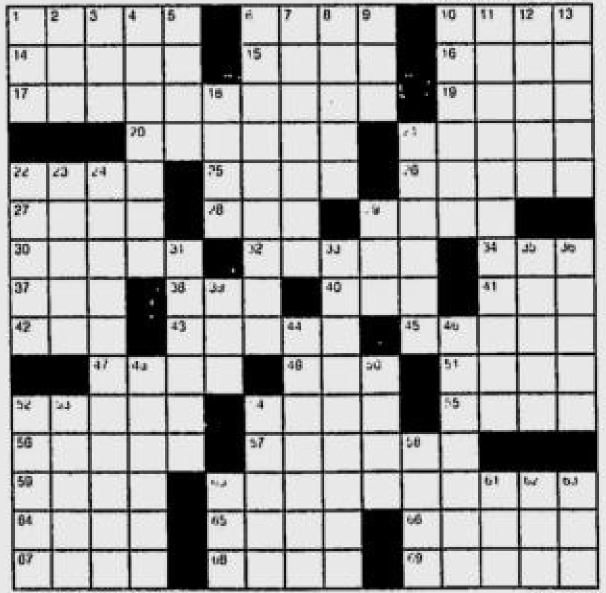
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You'll be in the money if you take advantage of investments that are just too good to turn down. You can make physical changes that will augment your personal appearance.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Be sure to make special plans to do something entertaining. Your desire to experience adventure and excitement will be satisfied through the connections you make today.

Birthday Baby: You are ingenious, quick-to-please and very intuitive. You have creative talent, drive and dedication to follow your dreams and to be true to yourself. You are kind, in control and ready to conquer the world.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY
11/21/01

ACROSS
1 "Aminta" poet
6 Wheels on the moon?
10 Heart of the matter
14 Wasted time
15 Pelvic bones
16 Beheaded Boleyn
17 Just about
19 British gun
20 Sermonize
21 Remains
22 First name in jeans
25 80-year-old prefix
26 Tractor man
27 Sheltered side
28 Orch. section
29 Director Ephron
30 Gleeful
32 More coarse
34 Greek letter
37 Some
38 Afore
40 Mother in sheep's clothing
41 Neurological test letters
42 Anatomical pouch
43 Bitter, once
45 Hold things up?
47 Vega's constellation
49 Class for U.S. immigrants
51 Function
52 Sandbar
54 Malarial sign
55 E.T. vehicles
56 Squishy
57 System of import-duties
59 Cookie snack
60 Just about
64 Dog from Kansas
65 Starter chips
66 Stag
67 Seth's boy
68 Listen to
69 Mortise insert

DOWN
1 Mel Gibson film
2 Stir
3 Letters on cameras
4 More oozy
5 Stench
6 Blue myrtle
7 Agamemnon's daughter
8 British journalist Glenny
9 Eur. carrier
10 Boastful guy
11 Just about
12 Look of derision
13 On edge
18 Early Oldsmobiles
21 Likes a lot
22 Tibetan monks
23 Barcelata song, "Maria __"
24 Just about
29 Recent
31 Annually
33 Internet explorer
35 Opening word
36 Eyes flirtatiously
39 GE acquisition in 1986
44 Boat race
46 Edible fungus
48 Coarse people
50 Han Solo's princess
52 Struck, old-style
53 A Great Lake
54 Make right
58 "Animal House" setting
60 Forget it!
61 Director Howard
62 John's Yoko
63 Adult males

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

A	B	C	S		C	L	A	R	A		R	A	T	S
J	E	H	U		L	I	N	E	N		F	L	O	E
A	V	E	R		E	L	T	O	N		K	I	T	E
X	Y	Z	A	F	F	A	I	R		A	S	K	E	D
				E	T	C		D	A	R	T	E	R	S
S	L	I	M	E		S	P	A	R	T	A			
H	A	G	G	L	E		L	I	E		D	E	S	K
A	T	O	M		B	W	A	N	A		I	L	K	A
G	E	R	M		E	A	T		S	L	U	M	A	N
			U	P	R	I	S	E		E	M	O	T	E
B	A	S	S	E	T	T		R	E	V				
R	E	L	I	T		R	C	A	V	I	C	T	O	R
E	R	I	C		T	E	A	S	E		L	I	M	O
A	I	D	A		A	S	P	E	N		O	N	A	N
K	E	E	L		U	S	E	R	S		T	A	N	S

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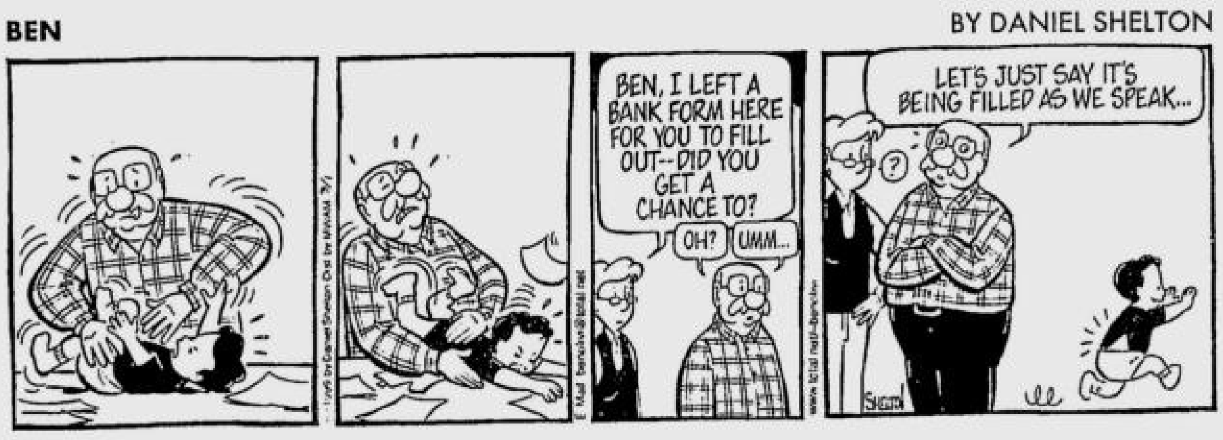
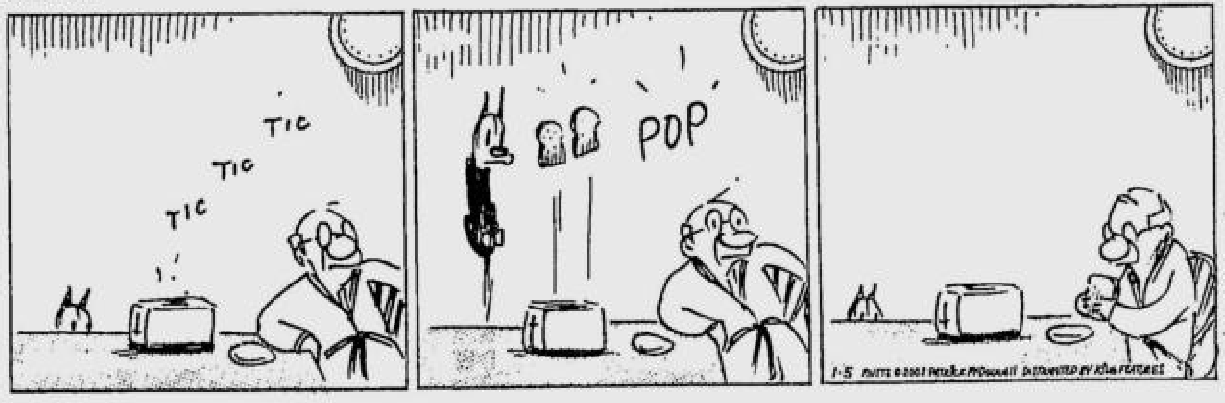
11/21/01

ANSWER ON MONDAY

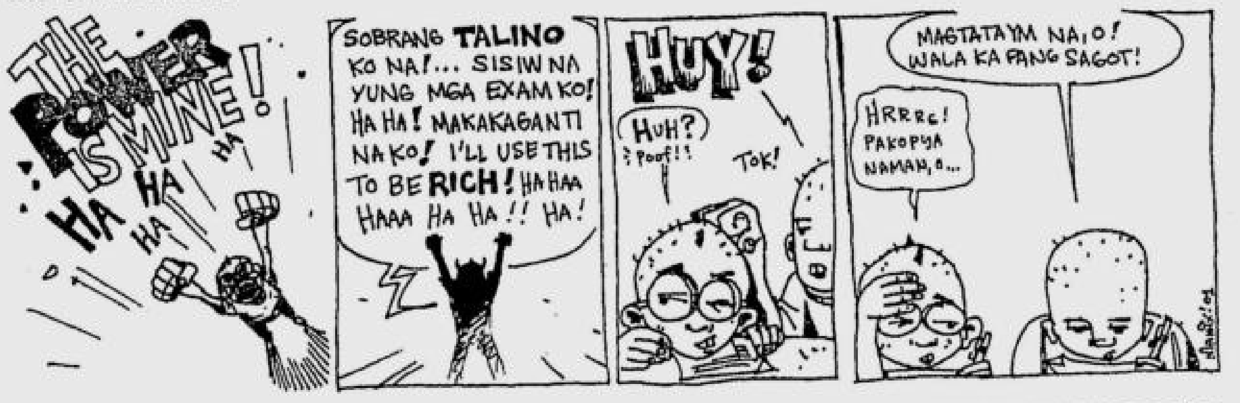
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


BEN, I LEFT A BANK FORM HERE FOR YOU TO FILL OUT--DID YOU GET A CHANCE TO?
OH?
UMM...
LET'S JUST SAY IT'S BEING FILLED AS WE SPEAK...
SHELTON

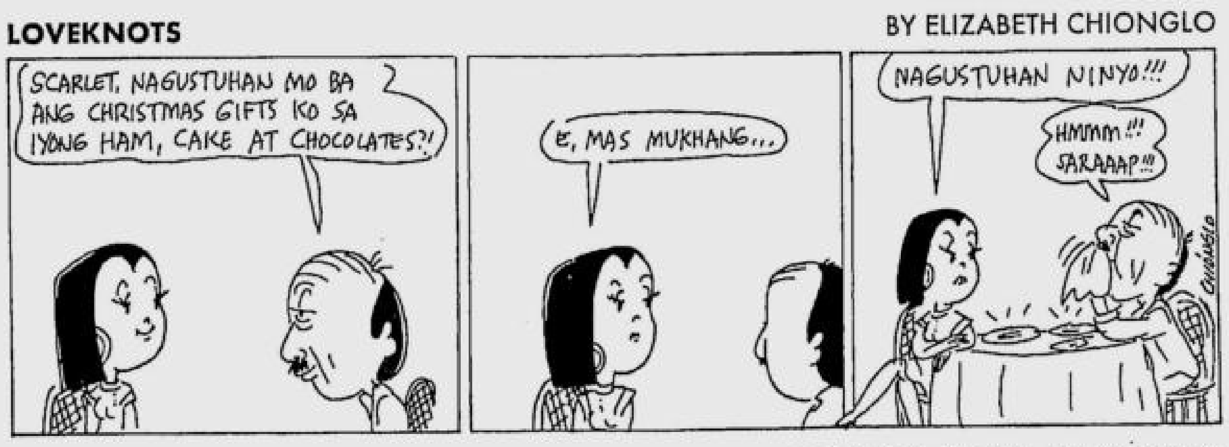
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


TIC
TIC
TIC
POP
1-5

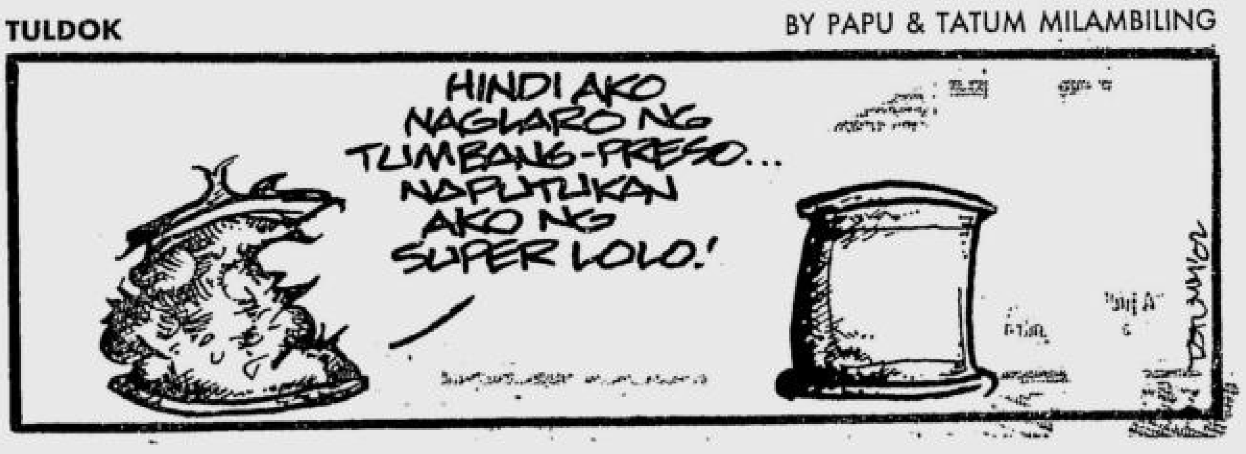
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


THE POWER IS MINE!
HA HA HA HA
SOBRANG TALINO KO NA!... SISIW NA YUNG MGA EXAM KO! HA HA! MAKAKAGANTI NA KO! I'LL USE THIS TO BE RICH! HA HAA HAAA HA HA!! HA!
HUY!
HUH? Poof!!
TOK!
MAGTATAYM NA, O! WALA KA PANG SAGOT!
HRRRG! PAKOPYA NAMAN, O...

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

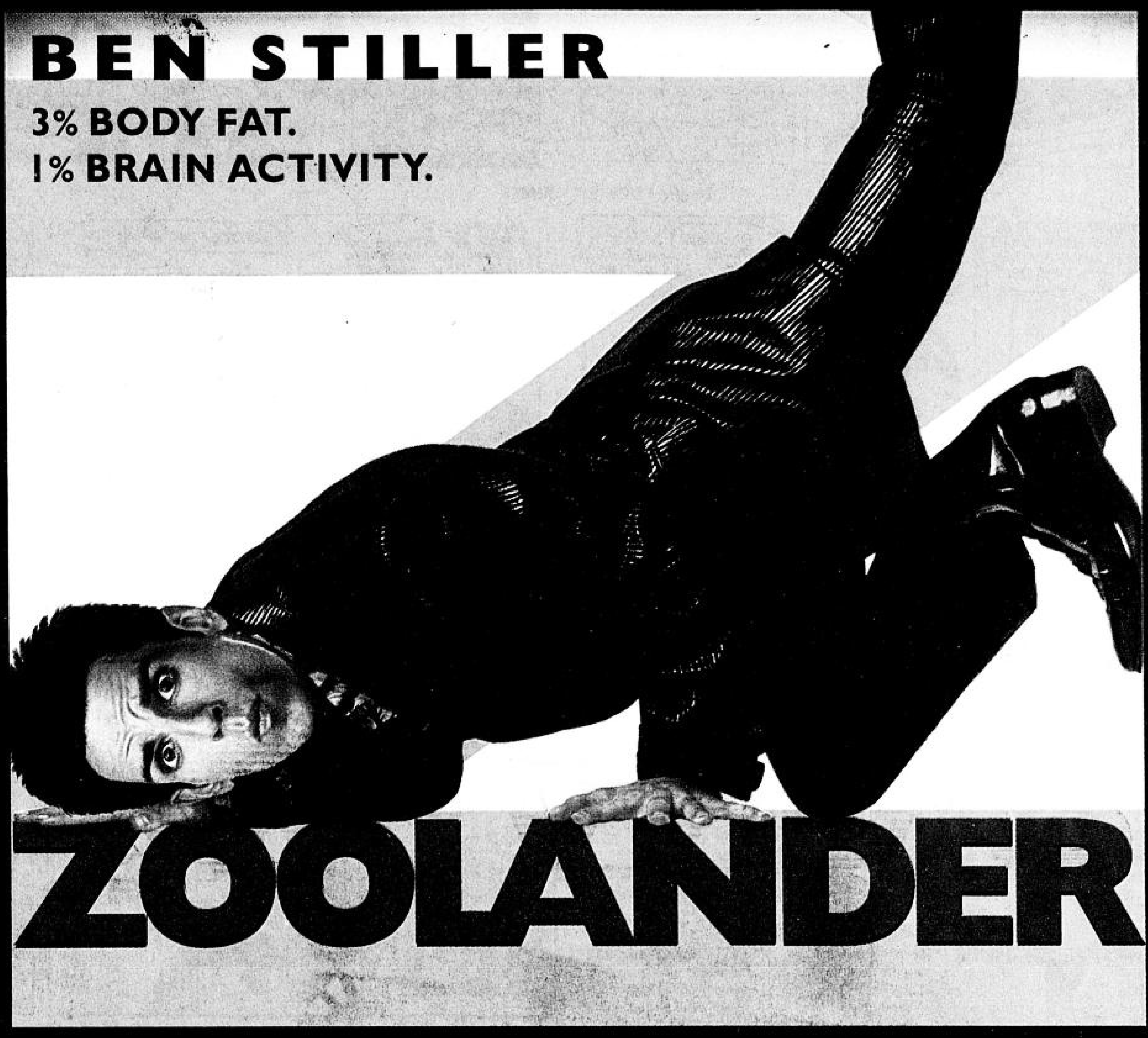

SCARLET, NAGUSTUHAN MO BA ANG CHRISTMAS GIFTS KO SA IYONG HAM, CAKE AT CHOCOLATES?!
E, MAS MUKHANG...
NAGUSTUHAN NINYO!!!
HMMM!!! SARAAAP!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK
BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


HINDI AKO NAGLARO NG TUMBANG-PRESO... NAPUTUKAN AKO NG SUPER LOLO!

Get set for the year's biggest blockbuster comedy!

THE SMART Cinema Club


BEN STILLER
3% BODY FAT.
1% BRAIN ACTIVITY.
ZOOLANDER

united international pictures

VIVA INTERNATIONAL PICTURES

OPENS IN THEATERS ON JAN. 16

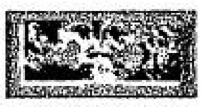
www.zoolander.com

MTRCB Rating: PG-13

Join the Smart Cinema Club now and get exclusive access to logos, picture messages, group graphics, screen savers, and Zoolander personality tests!

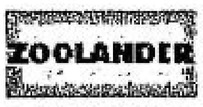
Official Zoolander graphics

ZOOLANDERL
(Operator Logo/Group Graphic)


ZOOFACEOFF
(Picture Message/Screen Saver)

ZOODEREK1L
(Operator Logo/Group Graphic)

ZOOTITLEPOSE
(Picture Message/Screen Saver)


ZOOTITLEL
(Operator Logo/Group Graphic)

ZOOCLOSEUP
(Picture Message/Screen Saver)

Are you a Supermodel?

Test if you're supermodel material or not.
Key in **PLAY ZOO**, then send to 239.

To answer the questions, press REPLY and key in the number <1,2, or 3> corresponding to your choice, then send to 239.

Are you a Trendsetter or a Follower?

Time to separate the leaders from the copycats.
Key in **PLAY ZOO2**, then send to 239.

To answer the questions, press REPLY and key in the number <1,2, or 3> corresponding to your choice, then send to 239.

How much Brain Activity?

Find out how much of your brain is active.
Key in **PLAY ZOO3**, then send to 239.

To answer the questions, press REPLY and key in the number <1,2, or 3> corresponding to your choice, then send to 239.

Note: If you're playing a Smart Cinema Club game, quit first before you start the personality test. To quit, key in QUIT and send to 239.

Get a pair of Zoolander premiere tickets for FREE!

Two ways to join!

1 Download a Zoolander logo, group graphic, picture message, and screen saver.

a. To access Zoolander logos, group graphics, picture messages, and screen savers, you must be a Smart Cinema Club member.

To join:
- Key in **JOIN CINEMA** and send to 239.

b. Once you are a member, you may download Zoolander icons. Simply follow the table on the right.

c. Smart Cinema Club members who show their Zoolander icons (on their celfones) on January 12, 2002 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Smart Cinema Club booth (SM Megamall Cinema 3) shall get two tickets each to watch the premiere on the same night at 8 p.m.

To Get Zoolander...	Key in...
Logo List of Keywords	LOGO ZOO and send to 239
Logos	LOGO <keyword> and send to 239
Group Graphics Keywords	GROUP ZOO and send to 239
Group Graphics	GROUP <keyword> and send to 239
Picture Messages List of Keywords	PIC ZOO and send to 239
Picture Messages	PIC <keyword> and send to 239
Screen Savers List of Keywords	SAVER ZOO and send to 239
Screen Savers	SAVER <keyword> and send to 239

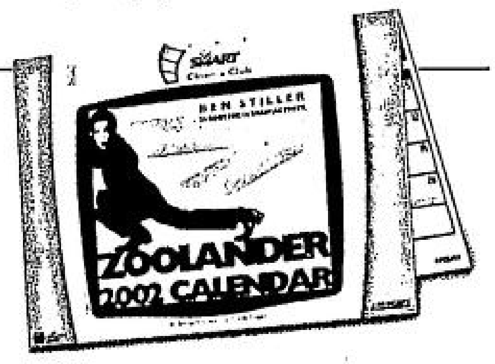
All text messages will be charged P2.50 each. Logos, graphics, picture messages, and screen savers are P12.00 each.

2 Use your SMART Money card to buy movie tickets at any SM Megamall cinema.

a. Smart Money cardholders who use their cards to buy any movie ticket at any SM Megamall cinema from January 5-11, 2002 are also entitled to a pair of premiere tickets each.

b. Present the Smart Money receipt on January 12, 2002, 6 pm, at the Smart Cinema Club booth (SM Megamall Cinema 3), to claim the free tickets.

Note: Smart Cinema Club members and Smart Money cardholders can avail themselves of the promo only once.



All winners will also get this limited edition Zoolander2002 calendar!

In cooperation with:

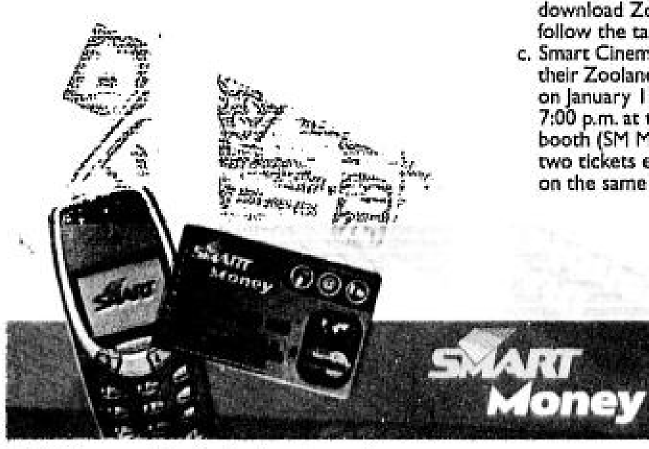
united international pictures   VIVA   SM CINEMA MEGAMALL

Powered by:

Information Gateway

SMART
Simply Amazing!

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-009 Series of 2002



SMART Money **Use your Smart Money to buy tickets in a flash and watch movies without cash!**

BUSINESS

RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ■ CORRIE S. NARISMA, Assistant Editor

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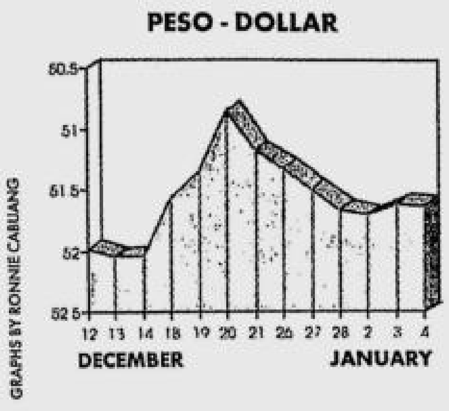
December inflation dips to 3.9%

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



Peso-Dollar Rate

P 51.63 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Jan. 4, 2002

¥ 131.18 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Jan. 4, 2002

GOLD:$278.40/278.90
per ounce Hong Kong,
Jan. 4, 2002

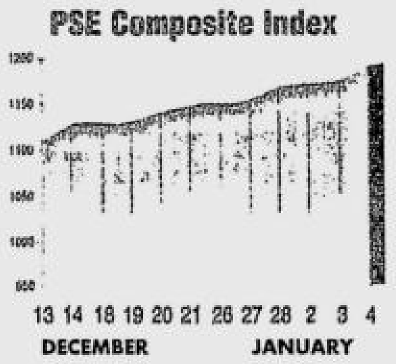
CURRENCIES

Jan 4, 2002

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.111605	1.000000	51.6860
Japan	Yen	0.008438	0.007591	0.3923
United Kingdom	Pound	1.599155	1.438600	74.3555
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.142697	0.128370	6.6349
Switzerland	Franc	0.673741	0.606097	31.3267
Canada	Dollar	0.695754	0.625900	32.3503
Singapore	Dollar	0.601421	0.541038	27.9641
Australia	Dollar	0.571226	0.513875	26.5601
Bahrain	Dinar	2.948712	2.652661	137.1054
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.296428	0.266667	13.7830
Brunei	Dollar	0.598764	0.538648	27.8406
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000107	0.000096	0.0050
Thailand	Baht	0.025247	0.022712	1.1739
UAE	Dirham	0.302725	0.272331	14.0757
Korea	Won	0.000854	0.000768	0.0397
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.899600	46.4967
Brazil	Real	0.487546	0.438596	22.6693
Denmark	Kroner	0.134227	0.120751	6.2411
India	Rupee	0.023110	0.020790	1.0746
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.292528	0.263158	13.6016
Mexico	New Peso	0.121940	0.109697	5.6698
New Zealand	Dollar	0.472621	0.425170	21.9753
Norway	Kroner	0.124968	0.112421	5.8106
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018543	0.016681	0.8622
South Africa	Rand	0.090338	0.081268	4.2004
Sweden	Kroner	0.108230	0.097364	5.0324
Syria	Pound	0.024217	0.021786	1.1260
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.031824	0.028629	1.4797
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001463	0.001316	0.0680

STOCK MARKET

Stocks stage strong rally



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARES staged a strong rally yesterday, taking analysts by surprise as expectations of an impending US-led global economic recovery grew, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended up 15.60 points, or 1.3 percent, at 1189.89, adding to Thursday's 0.4-percent gain. The index has risen 3.9 percent in the past five sessions.

Volume rose to 568.07 million shares worth P530.48 million from 486.16 million shares worth P215.09 million on Thursday.

"I think the market's rise surprised a lot of people, except those who bought up the share prices," said AB Capital Securities analyst Jose Vistan. "We can pinpoint several reasons, one of which is optimism over another round of interest rate reduction based on the low inflation figure that came out this morning."

The government reported early yesterday that consumer prices rose 3.9 percent in December, in line with economists' expectation, and slower than November's 4.4 percent.

Reports of rising US computer chip sales and prices have also helped bolster sentiment in the Philippine stock market, traders said. The reports boosted the Dow Jones Industrial Average one percent and the Nasdaq Composite Index 3.3 percent Thursday.

"This means the (economic) turnaround could come from the information technology sector, which could help the Philippines because it is exporting electronic equipment," said Vistan.

Stocks managed to shrug off yesterday's Philippine export data, which showed a 20.7-percent contraction in November exports to $2.6 billion, with electronics suffering a 26.2-percent drop during the same period. *AP*

PLDT leads broadband mart

TELECOMMUNICATIONS leader Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. has cornered 80 percent of the residential broadband market, reinforcing its goal to dominate the country's data market this year.

PLDT vice president for national retail marketing Joaquin San Agustin said they led the pack of residential broadband service providers with 3,500 subscribers as of end-2001.

Since the launch of the PLDT myDSL residential broadband service in January, he said they had engaged in aggressive direct marketing efforts like service demonstrations in schools, subdivisions, condominiums and malls nationwide to build up their subscriber base.

Because of these marketing efforts, San Agustin said they had a difficult time meeting the demand, especially during the earlier part of their rollout.

"The problem before was congestion because of lack of international bandwidth. We received a lot of complaints," he said.

But he said they had already increased their international bandwidth capacity to help meet the increasing demand for residential broadband.

He added that "PLDT is also fast-tracking its various bandwidth projects and is set to significantly further increase its international bandwidth. This will further reinforce PLDT's stand as the provider of the biggest international gateway to the Internet."

PLDT has also forged strategic tie-ups with information technology leaders like Microsoft, Intel, Compaq and Apple to aid it in its drive to maintain its status as leader in the residential broadband market.

By Doris C. Dumlao

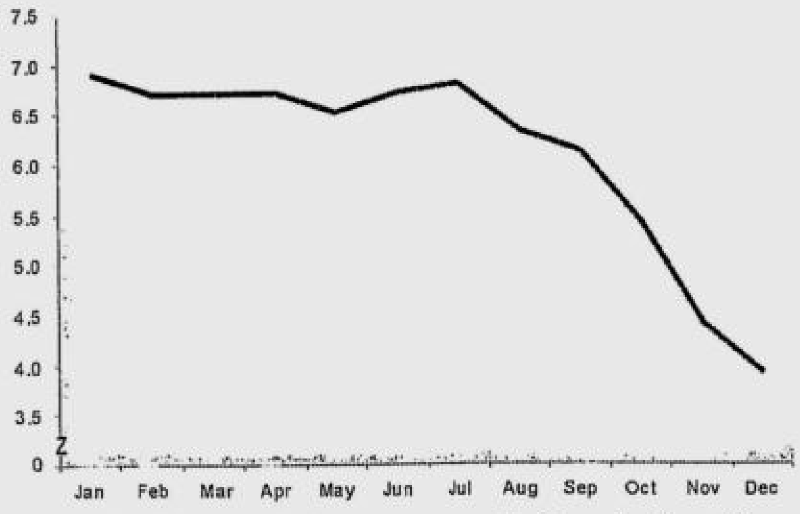
THE INCREASE in the prices of consumer goods and services declined to 3.9 percent in December, the lowest in 18 months, the government announced yesterday.

It was also a sharp reduction from the 4.4 percent inflation rate for November, the National Statistics Office said.

The December figure is the smallest year-on-year rise since June 2000 when inflation also stood at 3.9 percent, the NSO said.

The slowdown in price increases was for all commodity groups, the NSO said, adding that inflation for the full year averaged 6 percent, well within the government's target range of 6-7 percent.

December year-on-year inflation for food beverage and tobacco slowed to 2.3 percent from 2.6 percent the previous month. Fuel, electricity and water prices in December rose 6.8 percent on the year compared to 8.4 percent in the year ending in November.



Inflation in the highly urbanized Metro Manila rose to 4.9 percent in December from 4.6 percent in November, ending the year with an average of 7 percent, it said.

But in the largely rural areas outside the capital, inflation fell to 3.5 percent in December from 4.3 percent in November, with an average rate of 5.7 percent for the full year.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the December inflation rate was within the forecast rate of 3.9-4.3 percent.

"It gives us the flexibility" to cut key overnight rates further, he said.

Buenaventura has previously hinted that there was room to cut overnight rates by a quarter to half percentage point.

The central bank last cut its key rates by a quarter percentage point on Dec. 14, bringing the overnight borrowing rate to 7.75 percent, its lowest in six years.

"We now have to review our inflation expectations for the next three months," Buenaventura added.

Economists envisage few obvious inflation dangers in 2002. A Dow Jones Newswires poll of 10 economists puts inflation averaging 4.8 percent in 2002.

Analysts believe the benign inflation rate would allow the government to maintain the low-interest-rate regime.

"This was way below expectations so it could pressure the Bangko Sentral to cut its rate particularly because the US Federal Reserve will likely do so during its next meeting later this month," Association of Securities Analyst of the Philippines director Astro del Castillo said. *With Inquirer wire reports*

Exports slumped 20.7% in November

THE COUNTRY'S earnings from merchandise exports contracted by 20.7 percent in November from a year ago as domestic goods continued to struggle against shrinking markets abroad as a lagged effect of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

Analysts expressed disappointment with the November export figures as most of them had expected that the contraction bottomed out in October when a slower decline of 13.5 percent was recorded.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that dollar inflow from the export of goods during the month fell to $2.63 billion from $3.32 billion the same month a year ago.

The slowdown in export receipts was led by the 26.2-percent decline in electronic components, which accounted for 54.2 percent of the country's total exports.

On the other hand, earnings from articles of apparel and clothing accessories, which ranked a far second with a 5.8-percent share of the total receipts, likewise slid by almost 19 percent to $151.86 million.

Exports of coconut oil rose by 104.4 percent but accounted for only $51.07 million of the total receipts.

Earnings from other products manufactured from materials imported on consignment basis and metal components also dropped by 16.3 percent and 22.2 percent to $34.65 million and $31.45 million, respectively.

From January to November this year, export receipts have now fallen by 14.7 percent to $29.5 billion, which was in line with the government's expectation of a 15-percent contraction for the year.

With the expected rebound of the US economy by the middle of this year, however, export receipts are expected to stay flat from last year.

Exports to the United States accounted for 26.7 percent of the country's total export earnings for the month. Earnings from the United States declined by 20.8 percent to $701.7 million.

Japan was the country's second top export market with a 13.1-percent share, but earnings likewise dropped by 39.1 percent to $350.81 million.

Other top export destinations were the Netherlands, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Germany, Republic of Korea and People's Republic of China.

AB Capital Securities analyst Jose Vistan said the market was already pleasantly surprised with the lower contraction in October.

"The terrorist attacks affected consumer confidence in the US which is our biggest market. I think that for December, we would see a further drop by 24 percent," he said.

Impsa to pursue project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INDUSTRIAS Metalurgicas Pescarmona SA of Argentina, which leads locally based CBK Power Co., is standing firm on its commitment to its Philippine investments despite the economic crisis in its home country.

Asisclo Gonzaga, chief operating officer of state firm National Power Corp., said Impsa representatives have expressed this sentiment as the Argentinian crisis would not affect the firm's projects here.

Impsa is the proponent of the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan hydropower project in Laguna and Quezon provinces.

However, CBK Power Co. is a 50-50 venture with US-based Edison Mission Energy.

The CBK power facility is intended to stabilize the electricity supply and demand situation in Napocor's Luzon grid.

"(Impsa) is here to stay, that's their commitment," Gonzaga said. "I think the crisis would not have negative effects on it since it has widely distributed ventures around the world."

He said Impsa was operating in more than 20 countries across the globe.

The crisis in Argentina has sent a ripple of worried anticipation in the global business community as the nation's fifth president in two weeks assumed office last Wednesday.

Observers are watching whether Argentina would find a way out of a four-year recession through a currency devaluation.

The CBK power facility's importance lies mainly in that it would be the sole pump-storage facility in the country.

According to Napocor, this means that when power demand is high, the CBK power complex could be tapped quickly to maintain minimum power load.

On the other hand, the facility could be used to pump water into its reservoir when power demand is low.

The $460-million project would be the only hydropower facility in the country that could pump water into its reservoir.

Aside from the construction of the pump storage facility, the CBK project also involves the rehabilitation of three hydroelectric power plants.

After rehabilitation, the three plants would account for a total generating capacity of 728 megawatts —Caliraya, 22.6 mw; Botocan, 20.8 mw; and Kalayaan, 684.6 mw.

FORMER first lady Imelda Marcos holds an old pair of shoes she used when she fled the country with her late husband ex-President Ferdinand Marcos during the opening of the Marikina City Footwear Museum in Metro Manila in this Feb. 16, 2001 file photo. Change has brought industrialization and Filipino shoemakers face crushing competition from low-price, high-quality imports that threaten to render the neighborhood unrecognizable or wipe out its shoe industry entirely. REUTERS

Globalization wrong-foots RP small business

WELCOME to Marikina, population 437,000: shoe capital of the Philippines and home to Imelda Marcos' notorious footwear collection.

How things have changed.

"When I was little there were rough roads, no lights," said 36-year-old Rosalie Manuel, sitting in the doorway of the Marikina footwear museum that houses more than 600 pairs of Imelda's shoes.

But change has also brought industrialization and Filipino shoemakers face crushing competition from low-price, high-quality imports that threaten to render the neighborhood unrecognizable or wipe out its shoe industry entirely.

Manuel, a guide at the museum, was born the same year flamboyant former first lady Marcos moved into the presidential palace, later amassing a collection of silk-covered slingbacks that were made in Marikina's backyard workshops.

Since then, sprawling metropolitan Manila, home to more than 12 million people, has all but swallowed the sleepy riverside town of Marikina, turning it into one of the city's quieter middle-class neighborhoods.

Roadside stands now sell trendy platforms instead of Marikina's trademark dainty, beaded slippers. Wholesale shops set up in family garages

GLOBALIZATION/ B2

RP foreign debt rises to $52.426B in September

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE COUNTRY'S foreign debt stock rose by 3 percent to $52.426 billion as of September last year from $50.895 billion as of the previous quarter due to increased borrowings of the national government and the central bank.

The external debt stock increased by $1.53 billion during the third quarter last year due to fresh borrowings of $400 million by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas as well as $300 million in loans by private sector companies during the period.

A negative revaluation adjustment worth $904 million on foreign loans denominated in other currencies that strengthened against the US dollar also contributed to a higher debt stock.

The BSP explained in a statement that a $134-million increase in investments made by residents in dollar-denominated Philippine debt papers helped reduce the foreign debt as of the third quarter.

The external debt stock captured by the BSP included foreign borrowings of the government and the private sector that were obtained with the central bank's approval. The data did not include the local borrowings of the government.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura noted that despite a higher level of foreign borrowings, the maturity profile of the country's outstanding debts remained favorable and essentially unchanged from the previous quarters.

He said the bulk of the debts or about 89 percent remained payable in the medium to long term with an average maturity of 16 years.

"The country's external position also remains comfortable as our gross international reserves are equivalent to more than 2.5 times the level of short-term accounts of those with maturities of up to one year," he said.

He noted that the country's dollar reserves should stand close to $15 billion as of end-December. The $400-million central bank borrowing in September was used to support the GIR.

Of the total external debt, the national government including the BSP and state-owned corporations accounted for 66 percent.

Almost half or 49 percent of the foreign debts were owed to official creditors like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. Thus, these carry softer terms than other types of financing.

Borrowings in the form of bonds, notes and certificates of deposits accounted for 24.5 percent. These borrowings were generally traded in offshore capital markets.

Obligations to banks, suppliers and other institutions comprised 22 percent of the total.

The country's largest exposures remained mostly in US dollars at 56 percent and the Japanese yen at 26 percent. The rest were denominated in 23 other currencies.

The debt stock registered with the BSP does not include other private sector accounts or those classified as loans without the central bank's approval.

Gov't committee to select NSC leaseholder this month

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry is optimistic the evaluation committee will endorse a leaseholder for the reopening of National Steel Corp. within the month.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II, chair of the NSC committee, expressed confidence that whatever would emerge from the committee's ongoing review would lead to a better understanding of the process.

Committee members, including NSC creditor banks and NSC majority owner Hottick-Renong, are currently reviewing three separate offers submitted by Cathay Pacific Steel Corp., Allengoal Steel Fabrication Trading Co. and Voest Alpine of Austria.

Roxas said the committee members met before the Christmas break and they have already received the pertinent information that they had requested from Capasco, Allengoal and Voest Alpine to flesh out their respective bids.

The committee earlier found the original offers submitted by the three parties sketchy. It had required the participating companies to submit the details of their offers in order to have a firmer base for comparison.

Roxas said he was expecting the NSC committee to meet again within the next two weeks to consolidate the offers and finalize its recommendation on who was the fittest to run NSC on a temporary basis.

The NSC committee was formed in May last year to bid out the lease contract to reopen NSC on an interim basis while NSC's majority owner Hottick Investment-Renong, and creditor banks led by Philippine National Bank look for a mutually acceptable arrangement to take over the company.

Roxas stressed that the NSC committee's role was recommendatory and that the creditors who have taken over the company's assets would still make the final decision.

NSC, which has been closed since November 1999 due to mounting losses and debts, is expected to reopen early this year with the selection of a new investor.

Pre-need plan sales hit ₱33B

SALES of pre-need plans grew by 12.6 percent in the first 10 months of 2001 to P32.6 billion from P28.96 billion during the comparative period the year before, data from the Securities and Exchange Commission showed.

Pension plans, which accounted for a little over half the total sales, registered a 31-percent increase to P17.6 billion from P13.4 billion recorded during the same period the previous year.

In terms of the number of pension plans sold, sales rose 24.38 percent to 303,990 from 244,400.

On the other hand, the sales value of education plans fell 9.51 percent to P12.6 billion from P13.954 billion, although in terms of the number of plans sold, there was a 22.38-percent increase to 193,392 from 158,024 during the reference period.

Emilio Aquino, SEC non-traditional securities and instruments department director, attributed this to the shift toward the sale of fixed value plans instead of traditional educational plans, which were generally costlier.

Life or so-called memorial plans posted a 51.68-percent jump in sales value to P2.38 billion from P1.57 billion, while the number of plans sold grew at a slower pace of 12.7 percent to 78,524 from 69,686.

In total, the number of pre-need plans sold during the first 10 months of the year grew 22 percent to 575,905 from 472,110.

SEC Chair Lilia Bautista noted that the increase in sales of pre-need plans was not surprising because uncertainty over economic prospects usually made people turn to investment instruments seen to provide security. *Elena R. Torrijos*

Giant food firms form agri marketing tie-ups

SOME of the country's biggest food firms have formed tie-ups to ensure a market for the produce of small farmers.

In a statement, Agriculture Secretary Hernani Braganza said yesterday that 78 agribusiness firms and buyers, including Northern Foods Corp., Nestle Philippines Inc., Kraft Food (Philippines) Inc. and Monterey Farms Corp., had formed tie-ups to help beneficiaries of the government's agrarian reform program.

These firms have entered into marketing contracts with 81 farmers' organizations, Braganza said.

He said the marketing program would introduce farmers to the process of contract growing, or producing goods based on orders from companies.

It will also allow farmers to create quality and production volume targets, as they will have to meet order slips, he added.

"A total of 143,065 farmer beneficiaries have been provided with employment opportunities through the awarding of lands, access to credit for livelihood projects, skills training, as well as employment in the constructions of various infrastructure projects such as farm-to-market roads," Braganza said.

The Department of Agriculture has offered a similar program.

It earlier set aside some 39,000 hectares exclusively to produce corn and cassava.

San Miguel Corp. will acquire the produce that its subsidiary, Monterey Farms, will use.

The project, which also has the support of Land Bank of the Philippines and the Isabela provincial government, is expected to generate some 165,000 jobs. It is one of the first projects undertaken to meet the Macapagal administration's goal of creating a million jobs by year's end.

An initial 39,000 ha of abandoned lands in the towns of Quezon, Malig, Quirino, Delfin Albano, Sto. Tomas, Sta. Maria and Cabagan will be used. The area will be broadened to cover an addition 150,000 ha in other provinces in Northern Luzon.

San Miguel has set in motion a program to get a million hectares of land dedicated to corn and cassava production.

The food and beverage giant is constructing starch manufacturing facilities costing about $10 million to $20 million each in Isabela and Negros Occidental to derive starch fructose and alcohol from cassava for its liquor business, and possibly a biodegradable plastic for its packaging business. *Christine A. Gaylican*

PNOC unit earmarks ₱326M for electrification program

By Ronnel W. Domingo

STATE-OWNED PNOC Energy Development Corp. has earmarked P326.5 million this year for the government's rural electrification program. The amount is almost double of PNOC-EDC's allocation for the program last year of P172 million.

PNOC-EDC president Sergio F. Apostol yesterday said in a statement that the amount would fund the electrification of 386 remote barangays in the country.

Last year, the energy firm was able to provide electricity to 157 barangays in its areas of operations.

"As we energize more barangays, we are able to find more and more ways to increase our yearly (commitment to) the government's O-Ilaw program," Apostol said.

The former Leyte congressman added that PNOC-EDC's goal was to fully energize all barangays that host its projects.

PNOC-EDC's main projects are geothermal fields and power plants in Leyte, Negros Oriental, North Cotabato, Albay and Sorsogon.

According to data from the National Electrification Administration, 7,776 barangays remain without electricity.

In an earlier interview, Energy Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. said his department aimed to energize four barangays a day or 1,500 barangays by end-June of this year.

Several independent power producers in the country have also agreed to help in providing electricity to 1,500 barangays.

Last June 15, IPPs committed to participate in the O-Ilaw program of the government.

Under the memoranda of agreement they signed, the different IPPs committed to provide electricity to villages near their facilities.

Mirant Philippines Corp., for one, has committed to spend about P1 billion to energize 1,000 barangays in the country.

The firm has already provided electricity to 90 barangays in Camarines Sur and Quezon provinces.

Mirant also committed P53 million to provide electricity to 53 remote barangays in Mindoro.

GOINGS-ON

D-LINK unveils new products

D-LINK International Pte. Ltd., through its local distributor Lattice Networks Inc. (an affiliate of American Technologies Inc.), has unveiled a broadband gateway for DSL and cable modems designed for small offices and home owners. These are the DI-701 and DI-804 that allow a group of PCs to share a single broadband connection to the Internet.

The D-LINK D1-701/DI-804 has two levels of security for protecting user's network.

Using NAT technology to share Internet access, it automatically makes a user an IP address from the Internet. Secondly, it is able to redirect specific ports to specific servers/workstations to provide services like Web or FTP services to the Internet.

The D-LINK DI-701 is easy to install. Simply connect the xDSL or cable modem to the WAN port of the gateway and a simple network hub or switch to the LAN port.

New eagle for Cebu Pacific

CEBU Pacific, the country's second flag carrier, recently welcomed the first of its Boeing 757 aircraft, for use in its Manila-Hong Kong route.

CEB chose the B757 for its international operations because of the aircraft's stellar performance and its comfortable, spacious interiors, which complement the airline's special brand of service. Though the B757 can easily accommodate 200 passengers, CEB has configured the plane for 179 seats, consisting of 14 business class and 165 economy, to give passengers more personal space.

The delivery of the second B757, named the "City of Manila," is expected by the end of January 2002.

Globalization wrong-foots RP small business

(From page B1)

sell molded soles from South Korea and leather from Taiwan instead of the locally made products of 50 years ago.

Yet some things here in Marikina haven't changed at all.

Centuries-old stone houses—a rare sight in Manila, which was nearly flattened by Allied bombs during World War II—still stand, some bearing bullet holes from the time when Japanese soldiers occupied the town and shoemakers joined the guerrillas in the nearby mountains.

Threat to old ways

The neighborhood's first shoe workshop still occupies a prominent street corner, the 400-year-old house with arched doorways now home to a cultural center.

Inside Marikina's family compounds, 70 percent of all shoes in the Philippines are still made here, by hand and in small batches.

Not for long, say pessimists, who see mass production in China as the main threat.

"They do it so fast. We do it slowly because we do it by hand," said shoemaker association head Carmelita Riofrio, sitting behind an office desk littered with shoe lasts and order forms.

In a network of outbuildings in Riofrio's family compound, dozens of workers trace and cut out shapes of leather by hand, stitch and glue them together to the sounds of American pop songs pouring out from overhead speakers.

Her own parents made baby boots, one bronzed specimen sitting proudly on her desk.

"For little manufacturers like me, change is very limited. We're using the same system handed down from generations ago," Riofrio said, her husband sitting in a corner and helping to label teetering stacks of shoeboxes.

Riofrio says she could double her current weekly output of 800 to 1,000 pairs if she spent P1 million on Korean or Taiwanese machinery.

But she doesn't have the money, and other members of the shoemaking association she heads are in the same position, she says.

Since China became a member of the World Trade Organization at the beginning of December, small businesses such as hers have been scrambling for a solution.

Economists say machinery may not be enough to save them.

"China will be a tough competitor because their labor costs are so low," said Luz Lorenzo, head of research at ATR Kim Eng Securities in Manila.

"Manufacturing in general will be the toughest field. If you want to survive, you have to move away from areas in which they are strong, like labor-intensive products."

Skills key to survival

Lorenzo said the Philippines could weather China's increasing dominance in manufacturing by capitalizing on strengths unique in Asia: a highly skilled workforce fluent in English.

"Skilled labor is really quite competitive, and the best use for that is in services," Lorenzo said.

Call centers, accounting services or design and testing for information technology are the best options, Lorenzo said.

Despite stubborn barriers to economic development such as corruption, rampant kidnappings, armed rebel groups and creaking infrastructure, the Philippines has one of Asia's highest literacy rates.

Primary education is exclusively in English.

Shoemaker Riofrio, herself a former primary school teacher, says she'd like to be optimistic about the future of her business but is reluctant to encourage her two university-aged sons to take on the family business.

"It's OK. I still make enough for three meals everyday. Plus *merienda* (snacks)," she said, laughing. "But if (my children) are doing this 10 years from now . . . only if it will be changed to mechanization." *Reuters*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Friday, January 4, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.5	60.5	58.5	59	614,300
China Banking Corp.	580	610	580	610	4,990
Citystate Savings Bank	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	16,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	25.5	26.5	25.5	26	830,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	199	201	199	201	68,790
Philippine National Bank	64	65	64	65	11,700
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27.5	26.5	27.5	7,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18	18	17	17	17,000
Security Bank Corp.	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.75	5,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	15.5	15.5	15	15.25	126,800
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Filipino Fund Inc	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	50,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1810	1810	1810	1810	50
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1035	1065	1035	1060	19,860
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.25	24.5	24.25	24.5	15,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	7,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.4	0.42	0.4	0.41	2,650,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	680	680	680	680	16,650
Ipeople Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	20,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	18,000
Piltel	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	10,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	422.5	430	422.5	425	93,740
Ivantage Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	100,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.017	0.019	0.017	0.019	104,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	23	23.5	23	23	189,500
Manila Electric Co. B	33	34.5	33	34	2,247,000
Petron Corp.	1.5	1.56	1.5	1.54	4,411,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.22	2.24	2.2	2.2	3,251,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	150,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2	2	2	2	26,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	150,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	42,700
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	24	24	24	24	10,000
RFM Corp.	2.34	2.34	2.28	2.28	1,736,000
San Miguel Corp. A	43	43.5	42.5	43	95,600
San Miguel Corp. B	54	54.5	54	54	395,600
Vitarich Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.64	0.65	0.64	0.65	20,000
Ayala Corp.	4.75	4.9	4.75	4.75	7,977,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	25,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.84	0.78	0.84	1,240,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.63	0.65	0.62	0.64	6,720,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	240,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	550,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26	26.5	26	26	96,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	20,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.155	360,000
Ionics Inc.	7	7	6.6	6.6	554,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	100,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.2	10,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.71	0.72	0.7	0.71	770,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.21	0.23	0.2	0.21	1,000,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.33	3,150,000
Music Corp.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.35	10,700,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	20,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	280,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	950,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.29	410,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	30,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.56	0.56	0.42	0.42	170,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	142,200
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.52	220,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	24.25	24.5	24.25	24.5	550,600
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.78	1.88	1.78	1.86	567,000
Globe Telecom Hldg (Pdr)	685	685	685	685	3,200
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	74,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10	10	1,700
Philweb.Com Inc. -Warrants	0.005	0.0055	0.005	0.0055	82,000,000
PROPERTY					
C & P Homes Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	260,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.34	0.35	0.33	0.33	2,190,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	900,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.76	1.8	1.76	1.76	3,190,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	30,000
SM Development Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	20,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.5	6.7	6.5	6.6	15,525,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	40,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	2.8	3	2.8	3	46,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	2,500,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.15	0.16	0.145	0.16	600,000
Omico Corp.	0.0034	0.0036	0.0034	0.0034	22,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.235	0.235	0.23	0.23	200,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	200,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	1,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	143,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	43,000,000
Pacifica	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	5,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	300,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.22	0.23	0.21	0.21	400,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,769,910	98,926,305.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	721,583,855	1,307,381,794.45
PRO	35,037,000	172,650,840.00
Mining	25,586,000	460,700.00
OIL	192,800,000	1,396,100.00
GRAND TOTALS :	976,776,765	1,580,815,739.45

AVERAGES

Banks & Fin Svc	506.83	UP 4.22
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,603.24	UP 13.04
PRO	524.97	UP 17.24
Mining	1,022.27	UP 17.55
OIL	2.09	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	699.08	UP 6.88
Composite	1,189.89	UP 15.60

NO. OF ADVANCES: 55; NO. OF DECLINES: 12; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 24; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 91; NO. OF TRADES: 2,815

DISCLOSURES

CHEMPHIL Group disclosed that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources extended anew its temporary lifting order until Jan. 20, 2002. The order allows the company to continue the operations of its sulfuric acid plant in Pasig City.

* * *

BOGO-Medellin Milling Co. Inc. postponed its annual stockholders' meeting scheduled for this month due to lack of quorum.

* * *

UNION Bank will have an extraordinary income of P52.767 million after the Supreme Court awarded the bank the right to collect the obligation of **Foodmaster Inc.** that was assumed by **Development Bank of the Philippines.**

* * *

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. denied having any information that could explain the 48.72-percent increase in its share price that rose from P0.39 to P0.58 per share.

* * *

AN EMERGENCY motion for appointment of Chapter 11 was filed last Dec. 20 with the United States Bankruptcy Court against **Music Semiconductors Inc.**, whose 90-percent outstanding capital stock is owned by **Music Corp.** The court has issued an order appointing David Bradlow as examiner of MSI and maintaining a status quo in the company.

* * *

COSMOS Bottling Corp. announced the resignation of directors Jose Concepcion Jr., Jose Ma. Concepcion III, Ernest Fritz Server, Francisco Segovia, Lauro Ramos, Alberto Gotuaco and Felicisimo Nacino Jr. from the company's board. Elected new directors were James Chestnut, James Harting, Russel Kisling, Gregory Kearney, Francisco Eizmendi Jr., and Genaro Lapez. Appointed corporate secretary was Francis Jardeleza.

* * *

CENTRAL Azucarera Don Pedro announced the resignation of Gloria Tan-Climaco as an independent director of the company. She resigned after accepting a position in the government. *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*

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COMMISSION ON APPOINTMENTS
Pasay City
ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCIES
Pursuant to Mandate of R.A. 7041
One (1) Legislative Staff Officer V (Fiscal Analyst III) Item No. 72/SG21-1 Qualification Standards: CS Professional; Bachelor's degree relevant to the job; three (3) years relevant experience and sixteen (16) hours of training.
One (1) Legislative Staff Assistant II (Clerk) Item No. 40 G10-1 Qualification Standars: CS Subprofessional; Completion of two (2) years in college; two (2) years relevant experience; eight (8) hours related training.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

pNotice is hereby given that the estate of the late spouses DOMINADOR T. MONTALES and JOSEFINA R. MONTALES has been extrajudicially settled among their heirs as per Doc. No. 136; Page No. 106; Book No. 11; Series of 2001 under Notary Public Atty. Antonio G. Avellano of Pasig City
(PDI-Dec. 29, 2001, Jan. 5 & 12, 2002)

NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the late CORAZON C. LOPEZ consisting of personal and real properties had been the subject of Extrajudicial Settlement of Estate executed by and among the heirs as per Doc. No. 12, Page No. 4, Book No. 1, Series of 2001 of Notary Public Ma. Rosalie Richa A. Taguian.
(PDI--Jan. 5, 12 and 19, 2002)

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INVITATION TO BID

The Department of Education through the Bureau of Nonformal Education is inviting all printers to the Printing and Delivery of the Translated Basic Literacy Materials, 250 copies/module/dialect (7 dialects). The approved budget for this project is P5,490,870.00.

All interested printers must submit a Letter of Intent before obtaining bidding documents starting **January 7, 2002** at the BAC Secretariat Office, Room 112-A, Mabini Building, DECS Complex, Pasig City or visit the DECS website at http://www.decs.gov.ph.

A pre-bid conference will be held on **January 17, 2002**, 10:00 AM at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, DECS Complex, Pasig City. The submission and opening of bids will be on **January 31, 2002** at the same time and place mentioned above.

DECS-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) **ERNESTO S. PANGAN**
Undersecretary
Chairman, DECS-BAC

(PDI -- Jan. 4 & 5, 2002)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of the Interior and Local Government
National Police Commission
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE
PNPCS Canvass and Award Committee
Camp Crame, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID

The **PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE COMPUTER SERVICE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE** invites all interested **PNP Accredited Suppliers/Manufacturers** to participate in the bidding of the following:

1. Supply and Installation of **Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) with Radio Base System**
2. One (1) Lot FED Computerization Project
3. One (1) Lot TMG Computerization Project
4. Magic V9 e Developer (Runtime and Deployment) and Microsoft

The detailed specification of these products will be released during the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on **Wednesday, 9 January 2002 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning** at the Conference Room of the PNP Computer Service in Camp Crame, Quezon City.

For more details, please call up PCI Lamps at Tel. Nos. 725-5108 or 415-1534.

(Sgd.) **PSSUPT CLAUDIO C CABREROS**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI -- Jan. 4, 5 & 6, 2002)

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NOTICE

Please get in touch with the Members Assistance Center, Social Security System (SSS), East Avenue, Quezon City or at any SSS office nearest your place of residence and file your death claim within 90 days upon publication, if you are:

	NAME OF BENEFICIARY	LAST KNOWN ADDRESS	NAME OF SSS MEMBERS	DATE OF DEMISE
1)	Rossana Biscocho	Not Indicated	Rodrigo Biscocho SS No. 03-4582180-5	November 14, 2001
2)	Arnolfo Cacayuran Alma Cacayuran	Unknown	Alfredo Cacayuran SS No. 03-3062768-7	October 4, 1999
3)	Alejandro C. Domingo	Sinilian 1st, Camiling, Tarlac	Remedios D. Domingo SS No. 02-3220661-4	November 27, 2001
4)	Feleciano Plateros Dupa	Harada Butai Sulop, Davao del Sur	Roger J. Dupa SS No. 09-1391238-2	September 14, 2001
5)	Teodulo M. Estella	Virginia Village, Dulog Bayan, SJDM, Bulacan	Jovita Estella SS No. 03-6034835-0	February 14, 1996
6)	Tessie Marquez	Unknown	Florentino N. Franco SS No. 03-4366040-8	November 18, 2001
7)	Norma	Catbalogan, Samar	Jose C. Gacumo SS No. 06-0787073-0	January 29, 2001
8)	Antonio Ito Unabia	Unknown	Agustina P. Ito SS No. 06-0602064-6	July 7, 2001
9)	Maria Fe Lascuna	314 Int. 8, Cortez St., Davao City	Renato Olaybar SS No. 09-0380820-2	November 11, 2001
10)	Milagros Rodriguez	Gasan, Marinduque	Jose M. Rodriguez SS No. 03-1132356-0	July 3, 2001
11)	Reynaldo Sarte, Jr.	1622 Leon I. Alvarez St., Tondo, Manila	Reynaldo Sarte SS No. 03-2834020-6	January 31, 2000
12)	Virginia Fancisco Pauline Soriano	299 Daang Bakal, Mandaluyong City	Edison Reyes Soriano SS No. 03-2601618-9	November 21, 2001
13)	Mary Hyedy Tejerero	Unknown	Pedro Tejerero SS No. 03-4465142-9	June 13, 2001
14)	Sherlita Timbas Romeo Timbas	Unknown	Francisco Timbas SS No. 07-1099005-7	February 20, 2001

-----Nothing Follows------

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The Directors, Officers and Staff of

THE PHILAM GROUP OF COMPANIES

announce with deep regret the passing away last January 3, 2002 of a colleague and friend

ATTY. RODOLFO M. DE LA ROSA

Former Corporate Secretary

His loving wife **Leonora Francisco** (†); children & in-laws, **Avic & Ronnie Tablante, Reuel & Angie, Ray & Cecile, Ning, Yet, Loida & Nestor Tan**; grandchildren, **Shaun, Nicole, Toni Rose, Adrienne, Denise, Jay, Camille, Julian, Juan Miguel, Gabrielle, Matthew, Riana & Serena** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, January 8, 2002, at the Mandaluyong Catholic Cemetery, after the 2:30 p.m. Requiem Mass at the San Felipe Neri Church, Mandaluyong City.

In Loving Memory

on the **Second Death Anniversary** of our Beloved

Natividad Valera Siy

January 5, 2002

From all the people who love you.
*Your husband **Peter**;*
*son **Pepeling** and wife **Anne**;*
*daughter **Lolotte** and husband **Luis**;*
grandchildren, relatives and friends.

We request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Masses will be offered today at the following Churches:

Our Lady of Lourdes Church *Kanlaon, Quezon City*	5:30 a.m.; 6:00 p.m.
Sta. Teresita Parish *Mayon, Quezon City*	7:00 a.m.; 6:00 p.m.
Sto. Domingo Church *Quezon Avenue, Quezon City*	6:30 a.m.; 6:00 p.m.
Immaculate Conception Parish *Cubao, Quezon City*	7:00 a.m.
Sta. Rita Parish-Philam Homes *Quezon City*	7:00 a.m.
Espiritu Santo Church *Rizal Avenue, Manila*	6:30 a.m.
Parish of the Resurreccion *BF Homes, Parañaque*	6:30 a.m.
Parish of the Presentation of the Child Jesus *BF Homes, Parañaque*	6:00 p.m.
Nuestra Señora de Guia Parish *Ermita, Manila*	7:30 a.m.
Malate Catholic Church *Malate, Manila*	7:00 a.m.
Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish *West Triangle, Quezon City*	6:30 a.m.; 6:00 p.m.

Our Dearly Beloved Mama

VIRGINIA REYES CARAG

Biñan, Laguna

Peacefully joined her Creator on January 3, 2002 at the age of 80.

Her late husband **Vicente Sr.** (†); loving children and in-laws **Jun** and **Karen**, **Jean** and **Ric**, **Vilma** and **Rody** (†), **Boy** and **Piccie**, **Ronnee** and **Bert**, **Vito** and **Mariz**, **Babsie**, **Terry** and **Tess**, **Chi-Chi** and **Freddie**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Resurrection Chapel, Labrador Subdivision, Tulay Bato, San Antonio, Biñan, Laguna.

Interment will be on Tuesday, January 8, 2002 at the Eternal Garden Park, Biñan, Laguna after the 12:00 PM Mass.

Atty. RODOLFO M. DE LA ROSA

Peacefully joined our Lord on January 3, 2002 at the age of 75.

His loving wife **Leonora Francisco** (†); children & in-laws **Avic & Ronnie, Reuel & Angie, Ray & Cecile, Ning, Yet, Loida & Nestor**; grandchildren **Shaun, Nicole, Toni Rose, Adrienne, Denise, Jay, Camille, Julian, Juan Miguel, Gabrielle, Matthew, Riana & Serena** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, January 8, 2002 at the Mandaluyong Catholic Cemetery, after the 2:30 p.m. Mass at San Felipe Neri Church, Mandaluyong City.

PAULINA SAMIN PANGILINAN

Died in the Grace of our Lord on January 2, 2002 at the age of 51.

We, her loved ones **NANAY, ATE & LARRY, PILAR & JORGE, BOYGEE & GRACE, CEETA**; nephews and nieces **LAWRENCE, PING-PING, GENE PAUL, GEOFFREY, ROSABELLE, ANNABELLE, JOBELLE** and **JAM** request those whose lives have been touched by our beloved **DITSE** to pray for the repose of her soul as she is born into eternal life.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. A Mass will be said on January 5, 2002 at 7:00 PM.

Interment will be on Sunday, January 6, 2002, 2:00 PM at the Holy Gardens Memorial Park, Angono, Rizal after the 11:00 AM Mass at the Resurrection 2 Chapel.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
Matthew 10:39

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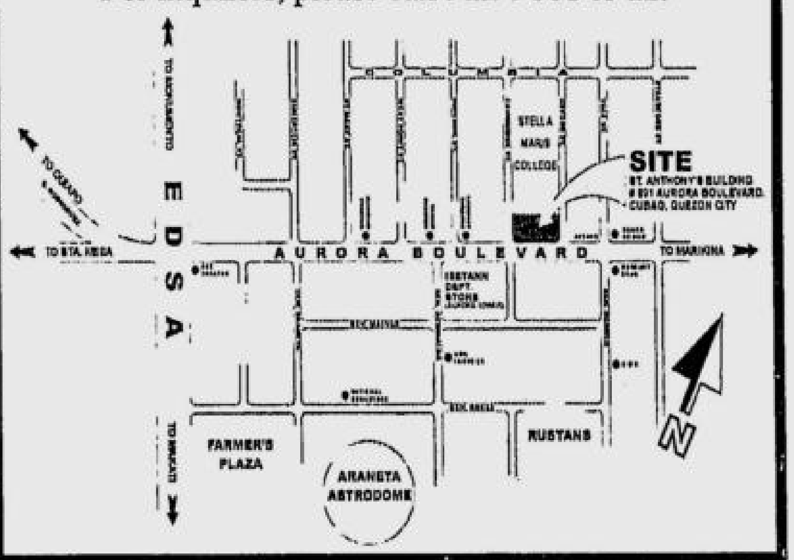

Our Dearly Beloved

Nori Gillego Gianan

of Sorsogon, Sorsogon and Tahanan Village, Parañaque City

Peacefully joined the Lord in His Kingdom on January 01, 2002 at the age of 84.

Her children **PETER & HELEN, STELLA & RENE, MANUEL & VIRGIE** and grandchildren, sisters and brother request the kind readers to please pray for her eternal rest.

Her remains lie in state at the Royal Chapel of the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels in Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Sunday, January 6, 2002 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at Eternal Gardens Biñan, Laguna.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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People, Events & Products

ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Editor
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Insurance protection for Citibank card members

CITIBANK card members can now avail of insurance protection that will pay for their credit card debt in case of permanent or temporary disablement or even death.

CreditGuard, an insurance coverage specially packaged for Citibank cardmembers, provides insurance coverage designed to ease the financial strain during the untimely demise of the cardmember or during any loss of income resulting from either temporary or permanent disablement due to sickness or accident. CreditGuard is underwritten by CMG Life Insurance Co. Inc.

In case a cardmember is unable to work temporarily due to an accident or illness, CreditGuard will cover the minimum monthly credit card payments for up to 6 months, keeping the account current and protecting the cardmember's credit rating. More importantly, CreditGuard can pay off the total outstanding balance up to a maximum of P600,000 in case of the cardmember's total disablement or death.

Citibank cardmembers can avail of CreditGuard for a very minimal monthly premium = 36 centavos for every 100 pesos of the total outstanding balance. For example, a monthly outstanding card balance of P25,000 requires only P90 worth of premium. No premiums will be charged for cardmembers with no outstanding balance.

Citibank will be automatically enrolling qualified Citibank cardmembers to CreditGuard, with the first 3 months of coverage given free of charge. Citibank will also pay for the one-time, upfront documentary stamp tax (DST). No health forms or statements are necessary. Certain policy exclusions will apply, details of which are found in the Certificate of Coverage that will be given to the qualified cardmembers. After three months, CreditGuard premiums will be charged to the cardmember's account.

If the cardmembers want to cancel the coverage at any time, they can call the CreditGuard customer hotline at 860-0999 or fax or mail the CreditGuard cancellation form.

AFP, UA&P SIGN MOA

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo witnessed the signing of a memorandum of agreement between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) School of Management on the yearly scholarship grants for AFP officials and dependents of enlisted men recently at Heroes' Hall, Malacañang. The President hopes to see the culture of entrepreneurship infused even more in the AFP not for business purposes alone. She cites that the principles of judicious business and entrepreneurship are applicable and useful in military science and tactics and adds that the rules in the boardroom have great relevance to the strategies taught in the war room. Shown with the President are (from left) AFP Chief of Staff General Diomedio Villanueva, Secretary of National Defense Angelo Reyes and dean Jose Rene Gayo of the UA&P School of Management.

DESTINY
STAR
DESTINY

DESTINY CABLE, STAR GROUP RENEW CONTRACT

Destiny Cable Inc. chief operating officer James H. Uy and Star TV Inc. vice president for distribution David Ilagan recently renewed their companies' contract for continued carriage of more than eight of Star's channels – Star Movies, ESPN, Star Sports, National Geographic, Star World, Fox News, Viva Cinema, Star Mandarin Movies, Channel [V] International, Phoenix Chinese Channel and Phoenix InfoNews Channel – until the middle of 2002. This dispels all rumors circulating concerning the discontinuation of Star's services to the premium cable service provider any time soon. Aside from the Star line-up, Destiny Cable Inc. also carries other popular channels such as HBO, Hallmark Channel, CNN, BBC, Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, Discovery Channel, Fit TV, AXN, CNBC Asia and is the exclusive carrier of the Microsoft Channel. Destiny Cable, while carrying over 70 channels, is also the country's leading provider of Internet on cable. Its cable TV service is widely available in Metro Manila and in Cebu (Mandaue). Cable Internet, on the other hand, is available in most parts of Metro Manila. For more inquiries, call (02) 841-9333, fax 841-9304/813-0237, e-mail customercare@mydestiny.net or text (0917) 321-3105. In Cebu, call (032) 346-4497.

NOKIA
NOKIA

NOKIA CONNECTS WITH UAAP'S BEST

Nokia, the world leader in mobile communications, was a key sponsor of this year's UAAP basketball league. Undoubtedly, the recently concluded UAAP finals was one of the most closely watched basketball championships as it once again heated up the fierce rivalry of La Salle and Ateneo. All roads led to the Big Dome to witness the much-awaited meeting of Ateneo and La Salle in the hardcourt after 13 long years. Shown is Parikshit Bhasin (third from left), country general manager of Nokia Mobile Phones along with this year's UAAP's top awardees (from left) Will Wilson (La Salle), 6th Man of the Year; Mark Cardona (La Salle) Rookie of the Year and Richie Alvarez (Ateneo), Most Valuable Player. Nokia congratulates the young talented athletes as they epitomize the youth of today – full of energy, determined and spirited.

CAVITE COAST CLEANUP

Intel employees with residents and barangay officials of Rosario, Cavite help each other clean their community during the International Coastal Cleanup Day. As part of Intel Involved, Intel's employee volunteer program, over 100 Intel Involved volunteers joined the project. 25 sacks of garbage were collected at the end of the day. The project was spearheaded by the 'Clean Up the World' program of the United Nations Environmental Program (Unep). Intel, the world's largest chip maker, is also a leading manufacturer of computer, networking and communications products. Additional information about Intel is available at www.intel.com/pressroom.

Apogee: redefining quality

APOGEE Essence International Inc., a Utah-based company with international affiliations, has put a whole new meaning to the concept of quality.

Phytonutritional health supplements and beverages are the main products of Apogee. They help the body combat cancer and other dangerous diseases through natural means. Phytonutrition is the result of years of research by health experts, Drs. Kim O'Neill and Byron Kerr Murray.

Apogee's products undergo strict quality standards. The raw materials are harvested at the exact time when they are richest in phytochemicals, the fruits and vegetables are gathered and flash-frozen using the latest technology in locking the power of phytonutrition. Once the ingredients enter the production stages, they are tested and quarantined until they are of appropriate standards. The products are then tested for contamination with microorganisms such as bacteria, fungus and other heavy metals. A final inspection is done prior to their release in the market.

These steps are performed with strict adherence and compliance to the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) procedures. The GMP process is the highest standard found in any company in the United States, exceeding the quality assurance requirements of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Complemented with the best scientific research possible, one can be assured of excellent quality products. This complies with Apogee's overall goal of better health for all through the power of phytonutrition.

For inquiries, call 811-0146 or visit www.apogee.com.ph.

Committed to improving the quality of human life by promoting a healthy lifestyle, Apogee cares for things that matter.

Fil-Canadian violinist in Manila

UNIVERSITY of Toronto violin graduate Melissa Lopez-Exmundo together with pianist Jonathan Arevalo-Coo is presenting free concerts opening 2002 with a series of cultural exchanges for educators, college and high school students, the general public, and music lovers. The outreach recitals continue with a concert at Odette Alcantara's Heritage House for the Artists for the Environment today, Jan. 5 at 6 p.m. The next two days (Sunday and Monday) will be interaction-performances in Laguna and Cavite at 7 p.m. at the National Arts Center in Mt. Makiling and at the Adventist University of the Philippines in Silang. The violin-piano duo will then present lecture-recitals at the Philippine Women's University on Tuesday, Jan. 8 at 10 a.m. and on Wednesday, Jan. 9 at 2 p.m. at Sta. Isabel College. The one-week NCR and Region IV tour will end with a televised performance for Fides Cuyugan Asensio's ''A Little Night of Music'' on GMA Channel 7 on Thursday, Jan. 10.

Poveda Alumnae Homecoming

THE POVEDA Learning Center (formerly Institucion Teresiana) high school batches of 1976 and 1977 will host a grand alumnae homecoming today, Jan. 5 at 2 p.m. The Silver Jubilarians will get together on the school grounds of their alma mater and concelebrate their 25th year with other alumnae. Activities include a Eucharistic celebration and a special program to be presented by the jubilarians and the graduates of 1971 and 1972, 1981 and 1982, 1986 and 1987, 1996 and 1997 and the most recent graduates of 2001. There will be an exhibit of photographs and memorabilia of the school and of the graduates. For inquiries, call the AAP at 635-0565 or Poveda Learning Center at 671-8756 extension 210.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORTS
Third Elementary Education Project

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: January 4, 2002
Loan No. 4108-PH
IFB No. PISU-CO/202001

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (through the Department of Education (DepEd) has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in various currencies towards the financing of Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP). It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for Supply and Delivery of Equipment and Office Furniture to the Elementary Leader Schools (ELS) in the Philippines.
2. The Department of Education (DepEd), Project Implementation Support Unit (PISU) for Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP), now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Supply and Delivery of Equipment and Office Furniture.

Item	Quantity	Item	Quantity
Office Desk and Chair	352 sets	Television and VCR Set with Stand	352 sets
Computer Desk and Chair	352 sets	Audio System	352 sets
Rectangular Table	704 pcs	Overhead Projector	352 sets
Conference Chair	2,816 pcs	Desktop Computer Set	352 sets
		Inkjet Printer	352 sets
		Mimeographing Machine	352 sets

Project or delivery sites are the 352 Elementary Leader Schools located in 22 provinces under the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP). A bidder may submit a bid for one item, two or more items, or all of the items indicated above.

3. For the purpose of this bidding, eligible bidders shall be those who have experience in the supply or selling and distribution or delivery of office equipment to remote areas in a developing country like the Philippines. The Purchaser will grant a margin of preference to goods manufactured in the Philippines.
4. Interested eligible bidders may inspect the bidding documents at or obtain further information from the Office Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) for Foreign Assisted Projects, Ground Floor, Rizal Building II, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Tel. Nos. (632) 636-6542 or 632-1361 local 2115, Fax No. (632) 636-6542, http://www.decs.gov.ph/
5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders starting **January 7, 2002** upon submission of letter of intent to the above and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00).
6. Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedures specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines.
7. Bids must be delivered to the Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, Department of Education, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines, or or before 10:00 AM on **February 19, 2002** and must be accompanied by a security of two (2) percent of total bid price.
8. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 10:00 AM on **February 19, 2002** at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, Department of Education, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.
9. Prior to bid opening, a pre-bid conference will be held on **January 24, 2002, 10:00 AM**, at the address indicated in paragraph 8.

(Sgd.) ERNESTO S. PANGAN
Undersecretary
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI -- Jan. 5, 7 & 9, 2002)

SARA LEE HONORS TOP DEALERS

The House of Sara Lee (HOSL), one of the country's leading direct-selling companies, honored its top dealers during its 9th annual convention held recently at the Westin Philippine Plaza. HOSL president of direct selling Asia Perry C. Mogar and general manager Ricky Sy headed the company's executive committee in awarding the best performers among the company's independent business managers (IBMs) and independent group supervisors (IGSs). Among the awardees were Virginia Tecson (Hall of Distinction), Aurora Marina De Leon and Estrella Almirante (five-year IBM Sara Lee's Best award). Shown (from left) is HOSL general manager Ricky Sy with IBM leadership awardees Gilda Estuye, Marissa Catolico and Virginia Tecson, and HOSL vice president for marketing Cristina P. Mendoza.

PROFIL CLIENT WELCOMED

A buyer-representative from High & Mighty, one of the valued clients serviced by PROfil V in London, is greeted by (from left): Philippine Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary Cesar B. Bautista, GTEB deputy director Philip JB Panlilio and commercial attaché Vicente A. Casim of the Philippine Trade and Investment Center in the United Kingdom. PROfil is an integrated promotional program for both original design merchandise and value-added services which helps promote the Philippines as the choice for one-stop-sourcing.

INQUIRER TRiViA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Earth heat

Q. How do scientist measure the Earth's temperature?

A. The best place to take Earth's temperature is from space. Satellites can monitor the entire planet, whereas scientists on the ground can only make measurements at local places. Also, cities and roads change the temperature by the way they absorb and reflect light, so that temperatures measured too close to them are often not accurate measurements of what's going on over a large area. Then, too, it's hard to get regular measurements from the middle of the ocean or from vast wastelands of desert. But from space using sophisticated measuring devices, you can get an accurate worldwide picture of the temperature, climate and seasons. The Earth's average surface temperature is about 13.85° C (57° F).

For the Record. The seasons are caused by the tilt of Earth's axis. If Earth had no tilt, that is, if Earth's rotation was perpendicular to its orbit, there would be almost no seasons. (There would be slight seasonal effects caused because Earth's orbit is slightly elliptical, so part of the year Earth is closer to the Sun and slightly warmer than at other times. However, this is a tiny effect compared with the tilt.) Because Earth's axis is tilted 23 degrees, the North Pole faces more toward the Sun during half ot its orbit, making it warm during that half of the year. The other half of the year, the North Pole is tilted away from the Sun, making it colder in the Northern Hemisphere. Then, the Southern Hemisphere points more nearly toward the Sun, making it summer there.

Past Forward. This day in 1919: An Austrian-born former soldier named Adolf Hitler founded the National Socialist German Workers' Party, popularly known as the Nazi Party, in Munich, and provided it with a program that mixed fascism with anti-Semitism. The originally tiny political faction would eventually rule Germany under Hitler (1933-1945).

WORD WATCH

Pulitika : ultimately, from the Greek *ta politika*, 'affairs of state.'

PDI – January 5, 2002

SCIENCE/HEALTH

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor ■ STELLA O. GONZALES, Assistant Editor

Tetanus: Deadly disease lurking in small wounds

BY CHARLES E. BUBAN

Illustration: JED ESTRADA

THE NEW Year's Eve revelry may be over, but not for some of its victims. Apart from those missing a finger or two, people who got wounded or incurred powder burns from exploding firecrackers have reason to worry.

The Department of Health warns that victims of firecracker explosions should take precautions against possible tetanus infection.

The DOH says that although the number of firecracker-related accidents had dwindled considerably over the years, tetanus infection remains an ever-present danger.

"There are those who suffered minor injuries but were not brought to hospitals. They are in danger of dying from tetanus, a deadly bacterial disease," warns Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit during a recent interview.

He notes that a large number of fatalities during the previous years' New Year's Eve celebrations were due to tetanus infection.

He explains that tetanus spores could be present in particles of paper and powder that enter broken skin. Inside the skin, they multiply and the deadly infection begins.

"Blast victims should go to the hospitals for an anti-tetanus serum shot," Dayrit advises.

Symptoms

The incubation period for the tetanus bacteria varies depending on the character, extent and location of the wound (from three to 21 days, usually about eight days, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

"It all depends on where the infection started. If it's near the area of the brain, the chances are high that symptoms will manifest right away," explains Dr. Ma. Lorela Suñas, a DOH epidemiologist.

The first signs of tetanus infection are usually headache and spasms of the jaw muscles. As the toxin spreads, muscle spasms in the neck, arms and legs as well as rigidity of abdominal muscles ensue.

People with tetanus may have to spend several weeks in the hospital under intensive care.

The victim may experience painful convulsions, which can be severe enough to cause broken bones. Prolonged infection eventually leads to respiratory failure, among other things. If not treated early, the mortality rate of this disease is high.

Rod-shaped bacteria

Tetanus infection is caused by a toxin produced by *Clostridium tetani*, a bacteria found primarily in the soil and intestinal tracts of animals and humans. It dwells in feces of horses, sheep, cattle, dogs, cats, rats, guinea pigs and chicken. Manure-treated soil could contain huge amounts of these bacteria.

There is a high chance of getting the infection from firecrackers because some manufacturers use animal manure to make their pyrotechnic products explode louder.

Under the microscope the organisms look like long drumsticks with bulges at the end. The organism is sensitive to heat and cannot survive in the presence of oxygen. It usually enters the body through a wound or any break in the skin. In such low-oxygen condition, the bacteria produce spores.

C. tetani spores can tolerate extreme conditions that the active bacteria cannot. These spores are quite tough, being resistant to heat and the usual antiseptic.

As the spores germinate inside the host, they eventually form active *C. tetani* that release an exotoxin called tetanospasmin. The toxin spreads through the blood and lymphatic system and attacks several sites in the central nervous system that causes the muscle spasms and other manifestations.

Even from tiny wounds

"Tetanus infection can be caught even from tiny pinpricks or scratches, but deep puncture wounds or cuts like those made by knives or other heavily contaminated instruments are especially susceptible to tetanus infection," says Dr. Suñas.

Even newborn babies especially those who still have unhealed umbilical stumps are also highly susceptible to the infection.

Tetanus is not contagious, however.

Cleaning all wounds, removing dead tissue and using antibiotics for contaminated or infected wounds can reduce the likelihood of getting tetanus. People with wounds that are deep or dirty may need a tetanus booster shot if more than five years have passed since the last dose.

An injection of tetanus immune globulin given as soon as possible after a tetanus-prone injury can also help neutralize the toxin that has not entered the nervous system.

However, the most important way to prevent tetanus is through complete immunization.

Bottled water undergoes tests for radioactivity

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

THIS isn't something out of a doomsday movie. In the Philippines, not only do we test the chemical and the toxic contents of bottled water. We're also testing it for radioactivity levels.

There is a big demand for bottled water analysis. In our country, suppliers of bottled water and even local water districts such as those in Cavite, Batangas and Subic and other water utilities that get their water from deep wells are required to have their water tested for natural radioactive content level.

Known sources of natural radioactivity are deep wells, groundwater and mineral springs.

Although the natural radioactive content of water in the country is way below the limit set by the Department of Health, suppliers of bottled water still have to conduct the test for their drinking water products before they get a certification from the DOH as per regulation set in 1994. This means they must earn a certification from the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute.

A bottled water is defined by the DOH as water placed in a sealed container or package and is offered for sale for human consumption as drinking water.

Radioactive levels

Most bottled water distributors claim their bottled water content comes from natural spring water; thus the source of the water is underground. PNRI senior science research specialist Soledad Castañeda explained that groundwater interacts with the soil, and the water content undergoes natural radioactivity. The natural radioactivity level should not exceed the regulatory limit prescribed by the DOH, otherwise the water is considered unsafe for human consumption.

Castañeda said radioactive levels depend on the geology of the source. Natural radioactivity contains radium and radon gas that could interact with water. The PNRI measures the natural radioactivity content in water. It employs the heavy and bulky liquid scintillation counter. A liquid scintillation counter analyzes the radioactive content of water brought in to the PNRI by the suppliers. A 100-ml water sample is evaporated to at least 1 ml. Then the scintillant cocktail is added.

Results of the analysis are released after a week or sometimes more. Liquid scintillation counting has been proven to produce results faster than previous methods. Castañeda said the PNRI has been able to analyze more samples.

The radioactive content of water could also come from man-made contaminants such as nuclear power plants. However, the absence of a nuclear power plant in the Philippines doesn't mean there is no danger of artificial contamination.

Hospitals, Castañeda said, are likely to dispose radioactive wastes, specifically from their radiation and cancer therapy gadgets. The PNRI has been tasked to regulate the disposal of radioactive wastes by the industries. The PNRI has a repository for radioactive wastes and the hospitals are supposed to bring their wastes there. The PNRI processes the waste and stored until such a time when the radioactive content has decayed to a safe level and can be exposed to the environment.

Bad effects

The PNRI analyzes the alpha and gross beta emitters. These are emissions coming from radioisotopes that are expected in the ground water. These two are not as penetrating as the gamma rays but their ionization effect in the body is stronger, said the PNRI. Castañeda claims that the potential damage caused by alpha and beta emitters can be more pronounced because they stay in the human body longer. "Thus, if you ingest water that exceeds the level of radioactive elements prescribed, the effects are harmful," she said.

Overexposure to radioactive elements in water could pose harmful effects. It could create mutations in cells that lead to disturbances in the body like cancer. Some of the effects could be radiation sickness.

Christmas puzzle solutions

(First of two parts)

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

ON DEC. 22, I published three puzzles from readers and urged others to send their solutions. After two weeks, I received 109 solutions. Here are the puzzles and selected readers' well-explained answers.

Rolly Lacson [rrlacson@skyinet.net] sent in the Robbers and the Bananas Puzzle.

There were three robbers who lived near a banana farm. They owned a pet monkey. One night, they stole a bunch of bananas and hid it near their house with the understanding that the next morning, they will divide it equally (whole fingers) among the three of them. Whatever remains will be given to the monkey.

Since they are robbers, they do not trust each other. So while the others are asleep, one robber woke up and went to the hiding place. He counted the fingers of the bunch, divided them into three parts and found that there was an extra banana. He gave it to the monkey, got his third of the bananas, and hid it in another place.

The second robber also woke up a bit later, also went to where they originally hid the bananas, counted what was left (after the first robber got his third), and divided the remaining bananas into three parts. There was also one extra banana, which he gave to the monkey. He got one third of the bananas and hid it in another place.

The third robber then woke up, went to the original hiding place, counted what was left (after the first and second robbers got their perceived shares), and divided the remainder into three parts. Again, one extra banana was given to the monkey. He got his share and hid it.

All three robbers woke up the next morning and went to the original hiding place of the bananas. They counted what was left, divided the bananas into three equal parts, and found one extra, which they gave to the monkey.

What is the least number of bananas (fingers) in the original bunch (before the robbers did any dividing)?

Several readers got the correct answer: At least 79 bananas were in the original bunch.

Lucy Sia [lucysia@edsamail.com.ph] has the following solution:

Let x = the least number of bananas in the original bunch

$1/3\ (x - 1)$ = the number of bananas hidden by the first robber

$2/3\ (x - 1)$ = the number of bananas remaining after the first robber hid his share

$2/3\ (2/3\ (x - 1) - 1)$ = the number of bananas left after the second robber hid his share

$2/3\ (2/3\ (2/3\ (x - 1) - 1) - 1) = 8/27\ x - 38/27$ = the number of bananas left after the third robber hid his share and before the three started counting and dividing together.

The three robbers counted one extra plus three equal parts, hence:

$8/27\ x - 38/27 - 1 = 8/27\ x - 65/27$ must be divisible by 3.

Let $a = 8/27\ x - 65/27$ where a is a multiple of 3.

Then $27a = 8x - 65$ $x = (27a + 65)/8$.

The least value of a which makes x a whole number is $a = 21$.

So $x = (27 \times 21 + 65)/8 = 79$.

* * *

Timothy Yusun of Xavier School had a number puzzle:

What is the smallest whole number, which when divided by the numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 will have a remainder of 1?

Again several readers were able to come up with the right answer: 2521.

I was especially impressed with Ricardo Estipona Jr. [onslaught8@edsamail.com.ph], who wrote a program to come up with the number.

He writes: Basically we are trying to find a number (X) which when divided by a certain number (I) produces a result with a remainder of 1. So that if we remove 1 from that number (X), then X – 1 is divisible by I or a multiple of I.

Finding the least whole number which when divided by any number from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 to always produce a remainder of 1 is the same as adding 1 to the least whole number that is a multiple (LCM) of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

I used iteration to solve for this problem. I counted from 1 and tested every number if it was a multiple or divisible by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. To make things simpler I made a program to do this process. "Mod" is the function that computes for the remainder.

```
Do While (is_divisible = False)
the_number = the_number + 1
If (the_number Mod 2) = 0 Then
If (the_number Mod 3) = 0 Then
If (the_number Mod 4) = 0 Then
If (the_number Mod 5) = 0 Then
If (the_number Mod 6) = 0 Then
If (the_number Mod 7) = 0 Then
If (the_number Mod 8) = 0 Then
If (the_number Mod 9) = 0 Then
If (the_number Mod 10) = 0 Then
is_divisible = True
End If
End If
End If
End If
End If
End If
End If
End If
End If
Loop
Output = the_number
```

There are of course easier ways of finding the LCM of several numbers. Ramon Morales [monsmorales@yahoo.com] reminds us of this:

Take the factors of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. These are 2; 3; 2x2; 5; 3x2; 7; 2x2x2; 3x3; and 5x2, respectively. By eliminating the common factors, the remaining factors will be 7; 2x2; 3x3; and 5x2. Multiplying them yields 2,520. Add 1 and this will give the answer to the puzzle – 2,521.

(Next week: The counterfeit coin problem)

The case of the royal disease

BY RAFAEL R. CASTILLO, MD

MEDICAL FILES

AS we celebrate the feast of the three kings, I am reminded of hemophilia, which has been called a "royal disease." Just like royalty, it is in the blood and it is something that one is born with. It is transmitted by clinically unaffected female carriers to their male offsprings. It is reported that several queens of England were carriers of the disease and they passed it on to their sons throughout the royal houses of Europe.

Hemophilia was already identified as early as biblical times. Doctors in medieval times were familiar with it as well. In 1803, a Philadelphia doctor published the first description of hemophilia in the United States. However, it was not until 30 years later that hemophilia became widely recognized.

Hereditary blood disorder

Hemophilia is characterized by a lifelong history of bleeding in a male, which is usually congenital or familial. The bleeding is rarely massive or profuse. It is more the slow, prolonged and oozing type usually occurring after minor trauma or procedures such as dental extraction.

Although hemophiliacs may be prone to infections, the disease itself is not an infection and one cannot catch hemophilia just like one catches a cold or H-fever. It is a hereditary blood disorder in which one of the blood proteins needed to form clot is deficient. When a person with hemophilia is injured, he does not bleed harder or faster than normal, but will have prolonged bleeding because he cannot make a firm clot.

There are two types of this disease, called hemophilia A and B. In persons with hemophilia A, also called classic hemophilia, clotting factor VIII is not present in sufficient amounts or is absent. In persons with hemophilia B, the deficiency is in clotting factor IX. Hemophilia B is also called Christmas disease, which is the name of the first hemophilia patient studied.

Although previously known to be a dreaded scourge in royal families, hemophilia does not only affect royalty. In fact, it is equally prevalent in every race and in all countries with a frequency of one for every 7,000 male births. Since it is a recessive trait, hemophilia primarily affects the males with the females as unaffected carriers.

Only makes

To understand further why the disease affects only the male, an understanding of basic genetics is necessary. We inherit from our parents two sex chromosomes, labeled X and Y. A woman inherits two X chromosomes, one each from her mother and father. This makes her female. A male inherits one X chromosome and a Y chromosome, instead of a second X.

Males are struck with hemophilia because they inherit only one X chromosome, which may contain the gene that carries the disease. Females, on the other hand, have a second X chromosome that is normal, which is why they only act as carriers and do not suffer from the disease themselves. Very rarely, a female may be afflicted with hemophilia if her mother is a carrier and her father also has hemophilia and she gets both defective X chromosomes.

Hemophilia is the oldest known hereditary bleeding disorder. Each year, about 400 babies are born with this disease. In the United States, hemophilia affects approximately 20,000 males with as many as one-third of the new cases found in people without a family history of the disease. Though there is no cure, medical advances in the treatment of hemophilia have enabled patients to reach a near-normal life expectancy.

Since hemophilia is genetically transmitted, those afflicted already have the disease upon birth. However, babies with hemophilia usually do not have trouble during the birth process. In some babies, hemophilia is suspected immediately, when a procedure such as circumcision results in unusually heavy or uncontrollable bleeding.

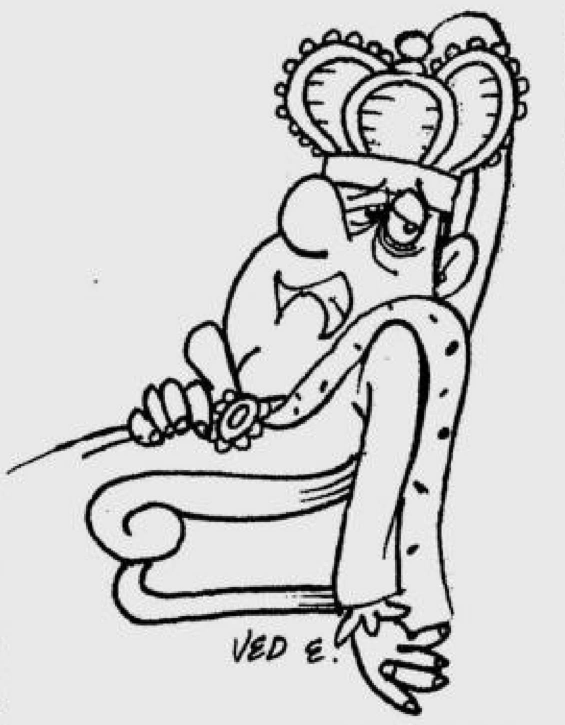


ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

In the case of severe hemophilia, the first bleeding event usually occurs prior to 18 months of age. Toddlers are at particular risk, because they fall frequently and may bleed into the soft tissue of their arms and legs. These small bleeds result in bruising and noticeable lumps but don't usually need treatment.

As a child becomes more active, bleeding may occur into the muscles, a much more painful and debilitating problem. The muscle bleeding results in pain and pressure on the nerves of the bleeding area. The nerve pressure can cause numbness and decreased ability to use the injured limb. Parents should be suspicious if their child frequently complains of "pulled muscles." These complaints may be due to deep muscle bleeding. In such cases, this should be a primary consideration unless proven otherwise.

Problems

The hallmark of hemophilia is prolonged bleeding after an injury. However, this type of bleeding is not the only potential problem. Other signs of hemophilia are frequent bruising, a hard lump under a bruise, swelling in certain joints, pain or numbness when using a particular limb, headaches, nausea, unequal pupil size and slurred speech. These additional symptoms may be due to serious hidden internal bleeding including hemorrhage in the head or brain.

In managing hemophilia, an important principle to prevent complications is to avoid injury. This may be quite a challenge, especially in children who are normally hyperactive. Parents of hemophiliacs should be especially concerned and aware of the following signs that could spell trouble for their children. It is advised that they seek help as soon as any one of these problems is noted:

- The child becomes unconscious.
- The child suffers a cut that will not stop bleeding or starts bleeding again after first aid measures have been instituted.
- The child suffers a head injury and subsequently develops headache, nausea, or vomiting.
- Blood is noted in the child's urine or stool.
- Bleeding or swelling around the child's neck.
- Complaints of unexplained abdominal pain.

Reducing risk of bleeding

There are a number of measures one can take to reduce the risk of bleeding:

- Ensure that all injections are given under the skin (subcutaneous) or into a vein (intravenous), and not into the muscles (intramuscular), where they can cause extended bleeding. Apply pressure for five minutes afterward.
- See the dentist regularly and maintain clean, healthy teeth and gums. Teeth that are not cleaned well promote gum disease (gingivitis), in which the gums bleed easily and excessively. Fluoride supplements may be advised to reduce the risk of gum disease.
- Exercise regularly. An exercise program will help build strong muscles and joints, and thereby reduce the risk of internal bleeding. Contact sports should however be avoided.
- Avoid drugs that promote bleeding, such as aspirin, heparin, warfarin and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

Treatment options

Aside from prevention, there are also a number of treatment options for hemophiliacs. However, treatment of hemophilia is highly individualized. Doctors tailor treatment methods to types and severity of hemophilia and to the patient's special needs. Both Factors VIII and IX, the proteins that are usually deficient in hemophiliacs, have been developed into a concentrated powder that is easily stored and quickly available for use. This has given many hemophiliacs the freedom, security and independence they never had before. The frequency of treatment with these clotting factors depends on the severity of the individual patient's disease.

Two types of concentrates are available. Cryoprecipitate is made from the blood of a single donor while Lyophilized factor VIII concentrate is usually prepared from the pooled plasma of several thousand donors. In the early 1980s, the pooled concentrate was believed to be responsible for the spread of the human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV) to many hemophiliacs. In fact, some statistics show that HIV is still a leading cause of death among hemophiliacs.

Aside from the AIDS virus, hemophiliacs are also exposed to other blood-transmitted diseases such as Hepatitis B and C. This is because hemophiliacs, especially severe cases, are constantly in need of blood products that has to be transfused during episodes of prolonged bleeding. These blood products contain the factor or the protein that their blood lacks. However, using these blood products means that one is exposing himself to the blood of a lot of people who donated the blood. Even if only one of these donors has HIV or any other blood transmitted disease, the recipient of the blood product may still be infected. At present, however, screening measures for donors are stricter and blood concentrates are either heat-treated or decontaminated and are thus said to be safe.

The prophylactic infusion of these blood concentrates is an acceptable treatment option, which can be instituted before a bleeding episode. A hemophiliac planning a sports event or dental visit can be infused the necessary blood concentrate before the event to prevent prolonged bleeding. However, the cost of the blood concentrate is quite high prohibiting its routine and regular use.

Researchers worldwide are currently working to develop a safe and effective gene replacement therapy. This therapy aims to replace the defective gene that bears the instruction for producing the clotting factors.

These are just some of the ways to prevent the potentially serious complications of hemophilia. Practically all of these are just supportive therapy and none can provide cure for the disease although gene replacement therapy may offer some exciting promise along this line. Like many other hereditary diseases, the best way to deal with hemophilia is to learn how to effectively prevent and treat its complications and make some necessary lifestyle adjustments to cope with it. Just like a king to his kingdom, the hemophiliac should treat his disease with respect and care, but with the will not to let the disease take the better part of his life.

(For feedback or inquiry, e-mail raffymd@i-manila.com.ph)

Saturday SPECIAL

NESTOR U. TORRE, Editor ■ EDMUND L. SICAM, Associate Editor

SANCHEZ. No sexually explicit jokes.

Giselle Sanchez leads a double life

By Edmund L. Sicam

MANY female comedians capitalize on their physical imperfections—a face only a mother could love or a body that measures 36-36-36—to make their audiences laugh. Giselle Sanchez, who has a supporting role in the Andrew E. comedy, "Burles King (Daw...O!)," thinks there's more to comedy than that.

Blessed with a whistle-bait figure, Giselle could have easily embarked on a career as a bold star. But she chose to tickle the audience's funny bone instead of their libido. Since she was a kid, Giselle says she has always wanted to make people happy.

Naughty one-liners

Giselle actually leads a double life. On TV and in the movies, she specializes in low-brow humor that appeals to the mass audience. In corporate shows, she brings her brand of humor several notches up to entertain company executives and employees.

In both cases, she uses sex to spice up her act, though she will not resort to sexually explicit jokes. She prefers to engage in naughty one-liners instead.

Sometimes, her naughty acts get her into some tight situations. There have been instances where members of her corporate audience went overboard. In one function, she had to tell an executive, "I am not a GRO."

Although she hopes to make it big in the movies or on TV, she realizes that it is her live shows here and abroad that keep her financially secure. Come February, she's off again to the US where she is the headliner in a Valentine concert in San Francisco.

Offstage, she has another identity as wife to Petron executive Emil Buencamino, her boyfriend of eight years. The two celebrated the first anniversary of their marriage last Nov. 4 and the effects of the honeymoon have not worn off.

We asked her about Emil's endearing qualities and she mentioned his sense of humor. "He may look shy at first glance, but when you get to know him, he can be quite funny," says Giselle.

Giselle Sanchez is her real name. She was named after Lorna Tolentino, whose first name is Giselle. The comedienne's mom was a big fan of the drama actress. She is a product of the UP College of Mass Communication where she graduated magna cum laude. Not too many people in show biz, both in front of and behind the camera, can lay claim to that honor.

Top comedienne

We asked her whom she considers the top comedienne in the country today. Ai Ai delas Alas was her quick reply. She idolizes Ai Ai because of her innate talent to make people crack up and marvels at how Ai Ai managed to fill up the Araneta Coliseum during her last concert.

She also has nice things to say about Andrew E. When they were shooting "Burles King," she and the rapper/comedian would have interesting chats on life, politics and his insecurities. They got along quite well during the shooting.

The movie is a spoof of the Ina Raymundo starrer "Burlesk Queen." Giselle plays the star stripper in a club who has one drink too many and can't do her act. It is up to Andrew E. to save the day with a strip show to end all strip shows.

Hollywood's 2001 odyssey

By David Germain

LOS ANGELES—For Hollywood, 2001 was a year of record revenue, a boom time for big film franchises, and a period of soul-searching over violent action films after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Box-office tracker

Movie-ticket sales for 2001 will total an estimated $8.35 billion by the end of New Year's Eve, up from last year's record of $7.7 billion, according to box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations.

Factoring in an estimated 4 percent rise in average ticket prices, admissions were up about 5 percent, the first increase since 1998, said Paul Dergarabedian, Exhibitor Relations president.

"HARRY POTTER." Instant franchise.

Blockbusters such as "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," "Shrek" and "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring" became instant franchises. The next two years will bring parts two and three of "Harry Potter" and "Lord of the Rings," while "Harry Potter" could become an annual or near-annual franchise through all seven chapters of J.K. Rowling's fantasy series.

A "Shrek" sequel is in the works, along with another installment of the family espionage hit "Spy Kids." Other new films with followups planned include "The Fast and the Furious" and "Legally Blonde."

Sequels

2001 saw its share of sequels, with "Rush Hour 2," "The Mummy Returns," "Jurassic Park III," "Dr. Dolittle 2" and "American Pie II." The industry's favorite serial killer returned in "Hannibal" after a 10-year absence since "The Silence of the Lambs."

A record five films topped the $200 million mark: "Harry Potter," "Shrek," "Monsters, Inc.", "Rush Hour 2" and "The Mummy Returns." "Lord of the Rings" could become the sixth film released in 2001 to hit that level.

Among the notable misses were "Scary Movie 2," which grossed less than half the $157 million the first film took in, and "Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within," which bombed with just $32 million.

Some major releases were postponed after the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, notably Arnold Schwarzenegger's terrorist-themed "Collateral Damage" and Tim Allen's "Big Trouble," a comedy whose plot includes a nuclear device on an airplane. Both films have been rescheduled for release in 2002.

Studio queasiness over how audiences would react to violent films after Sept. 11 has eased. In the months since then, violent movies such as "Training Day," "Don't Say a Word" and "Spy Game" performed well at the box office, softening worries about the action films and thrillers that are among Hollywood's mainstays.

HOLLYWOOD/p.C3

Being truly child-friendly on television

By Nestor U. Torre

ABS-CBN recently received a KBP Alay sa Kabataan award that means a lot to the network—Most Child-Friendly Station. The network won the honor due to its strong family-oriented programming.

In addition Channel 2's "Wansapanataym" won as Best Weekly Children's Program and "Sine-skwela" was Best Daily Children's Program. And ABS-CBN's voter education campaign, "Vote for Me," won the Alay ng Kabataan award for Best Public Service Announcement.

Full potential

The criteria for the Most Child-Friendly Station award include the airing of programs that help children develop to their full potential, physically, mentally and socially, as well as programs that promote an appreciation of the child's own culture parallel to other cultures, and the station's sensitivity to children even in programs not specifically designed for kids.

We congratulate ABS-CBN for its Alay sa Kabataan Awards, especially for the Most Child-Friendly Station plum. There's no doubt that, specifically during morning hours, the TV network comes up with the best locally-produced shows for children.

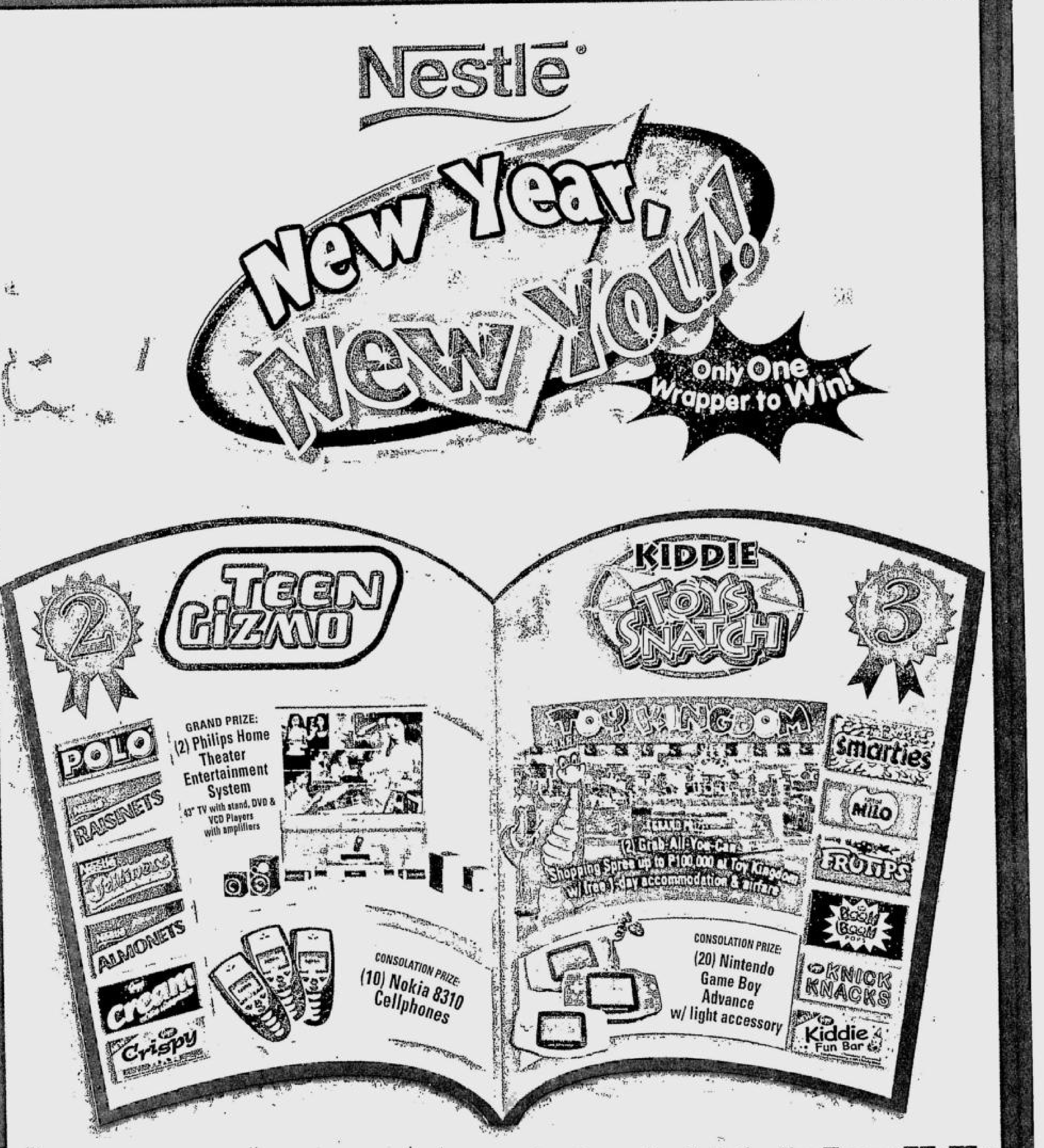
Criterion

However, that last criterion ("sensitivity to children even in programs not specifically designed for kids") highlights a flaw in the network's programming that it should seek to rectify if it is to truly deserve its Most Child-Friendly Station award.

This is not to diminish the network's achievements

BEING/p.C2

IT'S BACK!


Nestle
New Year, New You!
Only One Wrapper to Win!
2
Teen Gizmo
GRAND PRIZE:
(2) Philips Home Theater Entertainment System
43" TV with stand, DVD & VCD Players with amplifiers
CONSOLATION PRIZE:
(10) Nokia 8310 Cellphones
POLO
RAISINETS
Jellinets
ALMONETS
Cream
Crispy
KIDDIE
Toys Snatch
3
Toy Kingdom
(2) Grab-All-You-Can Shopping Spree up to P100,000 at Toy Kingdom w/ free 1-day accommodation & airfare
CONSOLATION PRIZE:
(20) Nintendo Game Boy Advance w/ light accessory
Smarties
Milo
Frutips
Boom Boom Pops
Knick Knacks
Kiddie Fun Bar

Nestle and Goya chocolates and candies give you another chance to get what you've always wished for.
Exciting prizes will surely make you look and feel good this New Year!

MECHANICS OF THE "NESTLE NEW YEAR, NEW YOU" PROMOTION

HERE'S HOW:

1. Write your name, address, telephone number and signature on a piece of paper.
2. Attach this to a single wrapper, label, pouch or cap of any of the following Nestle or Goya products: Polo, Raisinets, Jellinets, Almonets, Goya Cream Bar, Goya Crispy Bar, Smarties, Frutips, Boom Boom, Knick Knacks, Milo Bar, Goya Kiddie Fun Bar, Goya Droplets & Wonka.
3. Drop your entries at the NESTLE NEW YEAR, NEW YOU drop boxes at designated Supermarkets and Groceries.
4. Or you may send your entries to any of the following:
   a) Goya, Inc., 23 M. Tuazon St., Parang Marikina City
   b) Nestle Philippines, Inc., 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City
   c) Or any Nestle office near you.
5. Promo is from January 1 - March 15, 2002.
6. Draw date is on April 5, 2002 and Cut off date is on March 15, 2002.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. All prizes are tax-free.
2. All prizes are not convertible to cash but transferable.
3. Prizes to be given away are as follows:

SHOWCASE	GRAND PRIZE	CONSOLATION PRIZE
Teen Gizmo	(2) Philips Home Theater Entertainment System	(10) Nokia 8310 Cellphones
Kiddie Toys Snatch	(2) Grab All-You Can Shopping Spree at Toy Kingdom	20 Nintendo Game Boy Advance

4. Draw date is on the 5th of April 2002.
5. Entries will be drawn per showcase per region.
6. The first valid entry drawn in each showcase per region will be declared as the winner.
7. A winner can only win once per showcase. However, a person can also win in another showcase in the same draw.
8. Three-fourths of the wrapper, label, pouch or cap must be intact to qualify as an entry.
9. All raffle promotion winners will be notified via telegram, which will indicate how and where they may claim their prizes. Prizes not claimed within 60 days from the date of receipt of telegram shall be forfeited only upon approval of DOH-BFAD.
10. Winners must present any two valid identification papers among the following along with the original telegram of notice when claiming their prizes: Company ID, Birth Certificate, NBI Clearance, Passport, Marriage, Driver's license or SSS ID.
11. All prizes are transferable provided claimants present the following: Letter of authorization from winner, any two valid identification papers or IDs of winner, any two valid identification papers or IDs of claimant and original telegram sent by Goya, Inc.
12. Prizes are subject to availability. Should a stated prize be unavailable for whatsoever reason, Goya, Inc. reserves the right to substitute the prize with another of similar value as deemed suitable by Goya, Inc.
13. A winner for a particular region must be a resident of the area of coverage.
14. Winners can claim their prize at the nearest Nestle office on the date indicated in the telegram.
15. All winners will shoulder travel/transportation expenses incurred in the course of claiming their prize.
16. An authorized representative from the Bureau of Food and Drugs will be present to supervise the raffle draw.
17. Goya, Inc.'s decision in concurrence with the DOH-BFAD is deemed final.
18. Nestle and Goya reserve the right to publish the names and/or photographs of winners for advertising and publicity purposes. All winners will be notified by mail.
19. All employees of Goya, Inc., Nestle Philippines, Inc., its advertising and promotion agencies, its packaging supplier, their spouses and relatives up to the second degree of affinity or consanguinity are not qualified to join.

Being truly child-friendly on television

(From page C1)

in the field of programming for children, but to point out that these shows can't be seen in isolation. Rather, it is the station's *entire* programming that should be child-friendly, especially during daytime and early-evening hours, when televiewing by kids is at its peak.

This is the problem with ABS-CBN and other TV channels: Despite the best intentions and achievements of its personnel who work in the area of programming for children, their efforts are contradicted and ultimately even negated by some of the network's *other* programs, which tend to be not just Child-Unfriendly but even Child-Inimical and Child-Harmful.

Noontime show

Take for instance the network's noontime show, which features some skimpily-clad starlets as guest dancers, "beauty contest" entrants in bikinis, hosts who sometimes come up with sexist remarks or comments that promote negative values, etc.

This is all done in the name of entertainment and TV ratings, of course, but parents and educators point out these program elements set very bad examples for impressionable young viewers.

Why does sex have to play a big role in noontime programs? Because it's an easy way to get people to watch those shows. But daytime *isn't* the time for adult material like that, because many kids are watching.

Of course, the TV people involved say that their treatment of sex is not really bold, it's only "cute and naughty."

Defense

Well, that's *their* defense. As far as some parents and educators are concerned, noontime TV shows have definitely crossed the line in this regard, and should be given more than just a slap on the hand.

From time to time, noontime shows do try to clean up their act, but they soon go back to their smarmy mode. It's really time for ABS-CBN's top decision makers to once and for all decide that, now that Channel 2 is the KBP's Most Child-Friendly Station awardee, it should set the pace for the entire TV industry by *eliminating* its noontime show's sexy dancers and bikini beauty contestants. *(To be concluded.)*

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM JAN 5 - JAN 11

CH	2	4	5	7	9	13	23	29	31
[illegible]	5:30 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 7:00 Arriba, Arriba 8:00 Mary D' Potter 9:00 Da Pilya en Da Pilot 10:00 Kakasa Ka Ba? 10:30 Sapul Kayo Dyan 11:00 "F" 11:30 Sports Unlimited	6:00 Final Drive 6:30 Auto Review 7:00 Barcelona Battle of the Gold Medalists 9:00 Fox News 10:00 The Working President 11:00 Auto Focus 12:00 Fox News	6:30 Wing Commander 7:00 Sailormoon Super S 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Celebrity Feud 8:30 Wow Mali! 9:30 Eazy Dancing 10:30 Saturday Night Specials	5:30 Imbestigador 7:00 Idol Ko Si Kap 8:00 Kakabakaba 9:00 Pinoy Blockbuster 11:00 Master Showman Presents	6:00 Star Trek 7:00 Special Unit II 8:00 Strange World 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse *Laureus World Sports Awards* 11:00 PGMA	8:00 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:00 Kagat Ng Dilim 11:00 IBC Elorde	6:00 Digital Tour 6:30 G2 Living 7:00 Explorer 7:30 Early Edition 8:30 Gilmore Girls 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 12:00 MYX Sampler	3:00 Q Show Case 7:00 Xclusive Cinema Special 9:00 Oras ng Katotohanan 9:30 Armor of God 10:00 Oh Tokyo 11:00 Pinoy Wrestling	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! Coming Attractions 7:00 Celebrity Profile *Andy Garcia* 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 FYE 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Uncut 11:30 Extreme Close Up
[illegible]	5:30 Sharon 7:00 Digimon 7:30 Wansapanataym 9:00 Pinoy Exposed 9:30 ABS-CBN Presents 11:30 Off The Record 12:00 The Weekend News	6:00 Fox News 8:00 Street Legal 9:00 NBA 11:00 Business & Leisure 12:00 Fox News	6:00 Zorro 6:30 Guyferd 7:00 Price Is Right 8:00 Sing-Galing 9:00 The Big Night 11:00 Sentinel	5:30 Partners Mel and Jay 7:00 Pokemon 7:30 Sinerama 9:30 Sunday Night Box Office 11:30 Che-Che Lazaro Presents	6:00 Entertainment This Weekend 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 Where In Time Is Carmen San Diego 8:30 Kids Say the Darndest Thing 9:00 Sunday's Big Event *Don Juan De Marco* 11:00 Sunday Report	4:00 PBA Game 1 6:30 PBA Game 2 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 Sinemaks 11:30 El Shaddai	6:00 Starship Troopers 6:30 Rugrats 7:00 Batman Beyond 7:30 Futurama 8:00 Bette 8:30 Veronica's Closet 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 Murder In Smalltown X 10:30 Twilight Zone 11:00 News Central	5:00 Quartermaster Window Shop 7:00 Sunday Mini-Series 8:00 Oh Tokyo 9:00 Sunday Night Movies 11:00 Bikini Open	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! Coming Attractions 7:00 The HollyWood Premiere *"Ocean's Eleven"* 8:30 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 E! Behind The Scene's *"Ocean's Eleven"* 11:00 E! True Hollywood Story
[illegible]	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 FPJ Action Cinema 11:00 Headlines 11:30 The Correspondents	6:00 Fox News 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Fox News 10:30 Unlimited Diving 11:00 Fox News	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 F 7:00 Mahha Go Go Go 7:30 Wheel Of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Touched By An Angel 9:30 Trabaho Lang 10:00 The Big News 10:30 High Tide	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 GMA's Best 11:00 Front Page 11:30 I-Witness	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Becker 7:30 Arliss 8:00 World's Most Amazing Videos 9:00 The X-Files 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:00 Sex & The City	5:30 Viva Music Channel 6:30 Viva Box Office 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Beat UK 7:00 Primetime Classics 7:30 The Nanny 8:00 Dark Angel 9:00 Charmed 10:00 News Central 10:30 Points of View 11:30 Jenny Jones 12:00 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:00 Q Showcase	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 In Focus *Woman of WCW* 8:00 Mysteries and Scandals 8:30 Serach Party 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 60 Minutes 11:00 Wild On *Mardi Gras*
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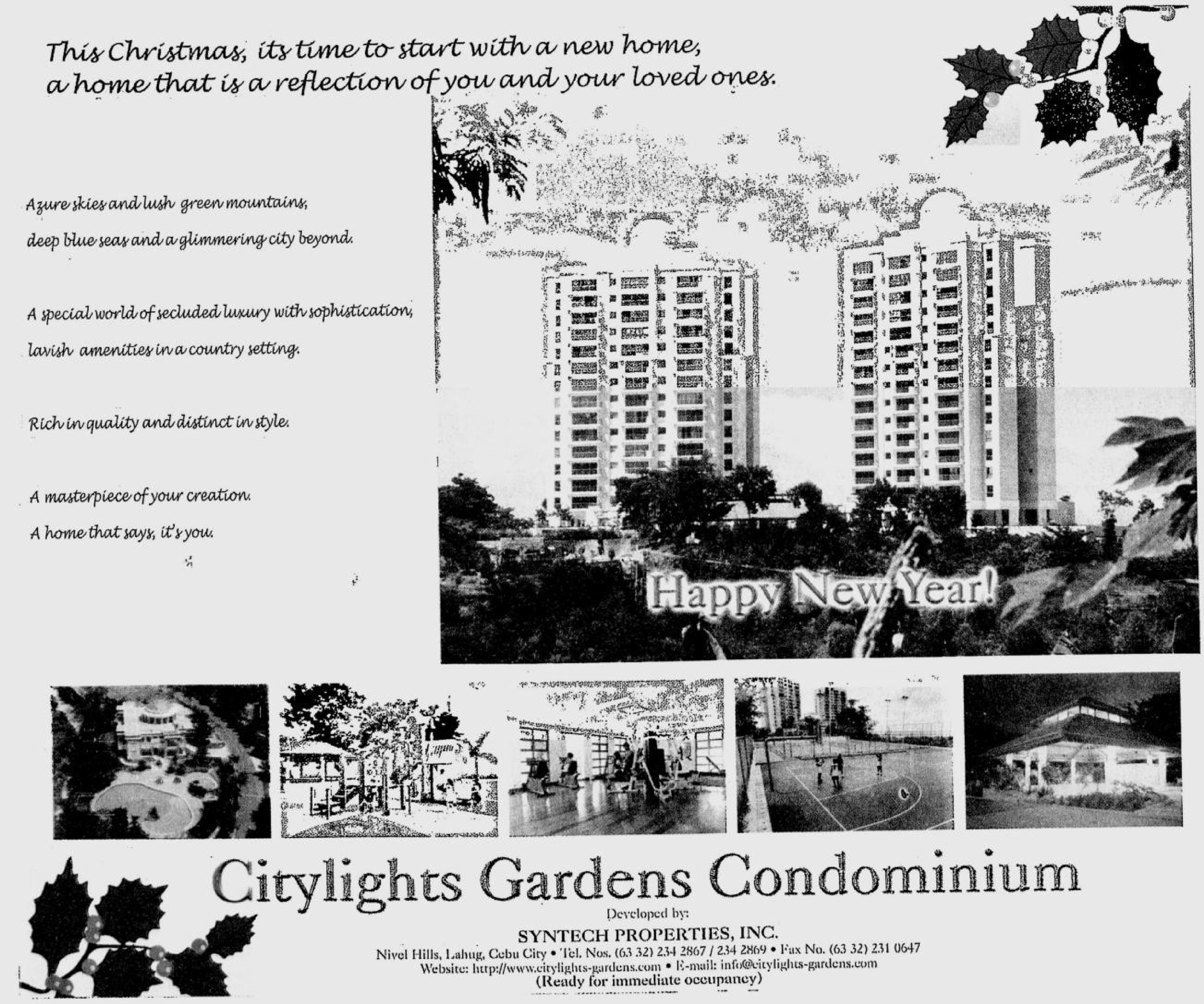

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Mini-series depicts highs and lows of Judy Garland's tumultuous career

By Nestor U. Torre

ON Jan. 6 and 7, the Hallmark Channel is telecasting the prize-winning mini-series, "Life with Judy Garland: Me and My Shadow." This is wonderful news for Garland's faithful fans, who continue to admire her talent and feisty persona despite the fact that she died way back in 1969.

Tough challenges

What made Judy Garland so great? There was her textured and powerful singing voice, of course—plus her precocity, the tough challenges she had to overcome. Even her vices, like her drinking habit, and her fits of depression and other psychological problems.

Instead of turning her fans off in the straightlaced and conservative '40s and '50s, Garland's weak points made her human and vulnerable, and thus more reachable for her admirers.

The Hallmark mini-series won five Emmy awards. It's an adaptation of the book, "Me and My Shadow" by Garland's own daughter, Lorna Luft. It stars Judy Davis in the title role, with Tammy Blanchard and Hugh Laurie.

Davis and Blanchard won as Outstanding Lead Actress in a Mini-series and Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Mini-series, respectively. The show's other awards were for costumes, make-up and hairstyling.

Garland catapulted to fame when she played Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz." She went on to star in 36 more films and cut a number of hit records.

The mini-series depicts both the highs and lows of Garland's tumultuous career, during which she was dependent on alcohol and prescription drugs, addictions which ultimately claimed her life.

Drug dependent

Ironically, Garland was made a drug dependent by the same producers who built her up as a fresh-faced young star who was adored by millions all over the world. When she made "Wizard of Oz," she was put on a strict diet of Benzedrine. In addition, she drank uppers to enable her to work for long hours, then downers to make her sleep.

This drug regimen had a terrible effect on her constitution and outlook on life. In 1944, she married director Vincente Minnelli. By then, she had made 20 movies in seven years, and she was completely exhausted.

When she learned that she was pregnant, she vowed never to take a pill again, But, when baby Liza was only one year old, her producer wanted her to make movies again, so she had to lose weight and had to resort to pills again.

Eventually, her career and marriage both hit the rocks, and she tried to kill herself. She got married again (to Sid Luft) and made a successful comeback with "A Star is Born," but it wasn't long before addiction and money problems pulled her down again.

Award-winning characterization

The high and low points in Garland's life make Hallmark's mini-series on her life a veritable roller-coaster ride of drama and extreme emotions, so Judy Davis had a lot to work on in limning her award-winning characterization.

The mini-series also benefits from its use of some of the great songs associated with Garland—smoky, sizzling musical numbers that expressed her pain and torment.

Even if you aren't a Judy Garland diehard, you should make it a point to catch "Me and My Shadow" this Sunday and Monday. The TV drama vivifies how torch singers and belters like Judy Garland are consumed by the flames of their own talent and torment.

JUDY Davis as Judy Garland.

Great-tasting 'pancit' treats

WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

A HAPPY New year to all! Another year has passed and it's time once again to make good our New Year's resolutions. My challenge to us all is to see if we can make this year's vows last longer than last year's. Look ahead and recall the past to avoid making the same mistakes in the future.

More obedient

All of us would like to start the year right—by working harder, being more dedicated to the family as a better spouse or parent, having more patience, forgiving others (being able to do this is one of the greatest deliverers of inner peace), being more obedient to God's word, etc.

On the other hand, some people rely on various beliefs to bring them luck. One of the most popular ones is that noodles bring good fortune. In parties, many believe that noodles bring longer life. I, on the other hand, believe in noodles when they taste good. Whatever your belief may be, this is worth checking out. Luck, I don't believe in. New and delicious, most definitely!

Everytime I passed Pasong Tamo, my attention was caught by a sign that offered "*pancit puti.*" Intrigued, I had to try it. This was two decades ago. I have been having this for many years now. I would have forgotten about it had it not been for my in-laws, Toti and Maribel Mendoza. They served it at their home once and I thought I'd remind all you foodies out there about this literally white-colored "*pancit.*"

Garlicky flavor

This is "*pancit bihon*" that is *guisado*. Made from high-quality noodles, it is pale in color. It is topped with shreds of pork and chicken. It also has chopped spring onions and toasted garlic. The flavor is a bit garlicky. Its taste is simple but I love it. With a little *patis* and *calamansi* on the side, it is a perfect *merienda* or midnight snack. It is also ideal with some toasted *pandesal* with Star margarine. (*Pinoy talaga*).

I say *merienda* because I had it once with other "*ulam*" and I thought it to be a bit bland. It must be the struggle of flavors of the other dishes that causes the tug of war in the palate. Whatever it is, it is new. It is different—but, most important, it is *masarap*!

There are hundreds of *pancit* variations, but only a few are great-tasting. *Pancit lang-lang* of three kids in Lipa is one of them. (Jon Bernardo's) Andoy's *pancit*, topped with processed *chicharon* in Pasig, is another, Tonang's and Red Ribbon's *palabok* is also exceptional.

So, whatever you believe in, fear not, this one will stand on taste alone.

This Pancit Puti is definitely worth a try. LSS Pancit Puti is located at 7559 Santillan st., Call tel. nos. 819-4623 or 843-1933.

Happy eating!
sandydaza@hotmail.com

'Nearness of You: The Ballad Book' has a strong narrative strain

By Noelani Torre

(Conclusion)

THIS album is as technically brilliant as all the other Michael Brecker recordings but it is less cerebral than the others and is more intimate and introspective. This is jazz at its finest, lulling the listener to relaxation and at the same time causing him to take note of all that marvelous playing and singing.

James Taylor lends his legendary voice to "Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight" and the title track, "Nearness of You." The latter is his own hit song but his reprising of it in this album seems to us to be graver and more contemplative. His rendition of Hoagy Carmichael's "The Nearness of You" is particularly lovely.

Value

It may come as a surprise to hear Taylor in a jazz album but we think that he adds, not detracts, to its value. "We've been friends since 1970," said Brecker of Taylor. "I'm a long-time fan and have had the pleasure of playing on several of his albums.

We've always had a musical chemistry. I knew I wanted a singer on the record and I immediately thought of James. The prospect of hearing him in a jazz context accompanied by Pat, Herbie, Jack, and Charlie was really exciting."

More satisfying experience

Another thing we like about this record is that Brecker doesn't hog the limelight (if that is possible in jazz). He has arranged it so that we can appreciate the musical styles of the other players, resulting in a more satisfying experience.

Hancock shines in Joe Zawinul's "Midnight Mood" and in the Kurt Weill-Ira Gershwin "My Ship." Metheny's superb playing in Flavio Venturini and Murilo Antunes' "Nascente" has even inspired us to think of taking up guitar. With DeJohnette's rhytmic utterances and Haden's fine grounding, we are held virtually enthralled from track one to 11.

Duet record

"This record reminds me in many ways of the duet record that Haden and I did a few years ago," notes Metheny, "in the sense that you can really dream with it. All in all, this is one of those records that I think people will really live with; it seems to have that quality of making you want to hear it again and again." We certainly agree!

Brecker is nothing but masterful all throughout the album as he dazzles us with his own "Incandescence" and gives a more soulful flavor to the usually perky Irving Berlin "Always". Understated and subtly complementary, he and his featured players invite us to sit back, close our eyes, and enjoy.

Hollywood's . . .

(From page C1)

"For a while there, you had to be concerned," said Nikki Rocco, head of distribution for Universal, which released "Spy Game."

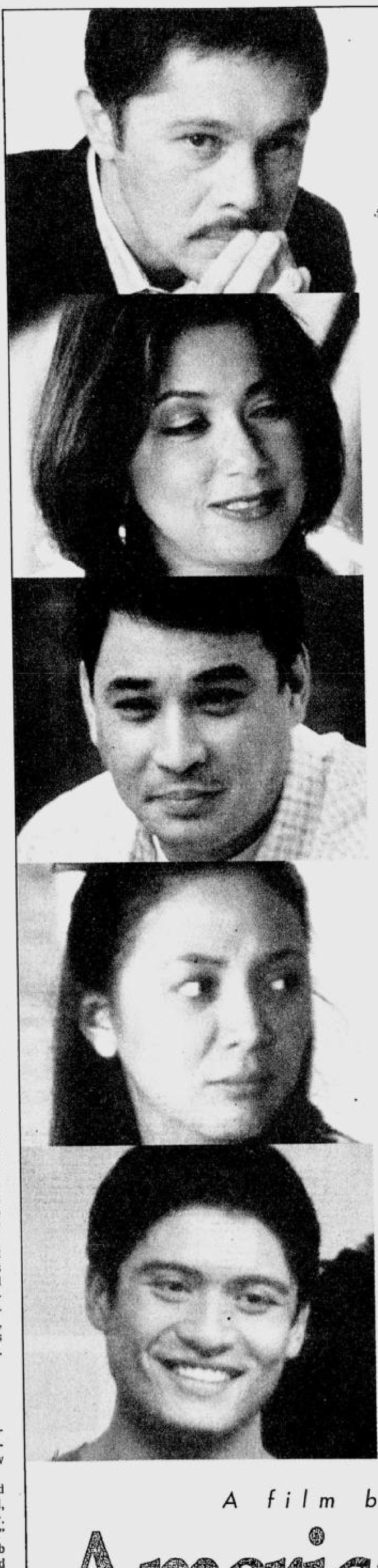
"Our job is to give audiences what they want, satisfying their needs. You had to sit back and ask, is this appropriate, because everybody's very depressed and we're at war. I think we've found everybody made the right decisions."

Studios moved up release dates for two combat films that had been scheduled for 2002: "Behind Enemy Lines" and "Black Hawk Down."

Besides an all-time revenue year, the industry had a record summer on the strength of heavily promoted, widely distributed movies. Hollywood mastered the method of front-loading—marketing films to ensure monster debuts and pack in as many viewers as possible in a movie's first few days.

A different box-office record seemed to fall almost every weekend, but few films had staying power. Movies such as "Planet of the Apes," "Pearl Harbor" and "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" opened huge, then nose-dived as grosses fell by 50 percent or more in subsequent weekends.

"People went to see films on their opening weekend, then migrated to the next big movie," said Dergarabedian. "But regardless of how big those drops were, movies were making money so fast they were still big blockbusters. It's not a marathon to $200 million anymore. It's now a sprint." *AP*



"I'm married, but I'm so unhappy."

Christopher de Leon is Mike,
whose marriage turns sour and
makes him reassess his priorities in life.

"Yeah right... relationships that ended
and made me feel so miserable...
so used... so empty..."

Garlic-mouthed Marissa, played by Dina Bonnevie,
lectures everyone on relationships but ironically
can't even manage her own.

"I could no longer live the lie.
Sometimes there's beauty in telling
the truth... and peace in accepting
the truth."

Sensitive Gerry, played by Ricky Davao,
harbours dark secrets which prevent him
from achieving self-fulfillment and following his true destiny.

"Dear Lorna...
ang aga nagsilaglagan ng mga dahon.
Para bang nagmamadali. Gaya ng
buhay namin dito. Baka isa na rin
akong dahong malapit nang malagas."

Cherry Pie Picache is Tere. Her life is a blur of work, eat
and sleep. The cycle threatens to dry her out, yet she yearns
to share herself and find meaning in life.

"We've had dinner a couple of times...
seen a movie a couple of times...
@#%*! a couple of times...
but that's not love."

Paolo Montalban is Raul, a young man with many
hot and passionate relationships,
all fleeting, none lasting.

A film by Laurice Guillen
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OPENS ON JANUARY 16

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SMART
Simply Amazing!

SOBIESKI. In little over a year, she's rocketed to the top of Hollywood's teenage A-list.

Leelee Sobieski hits the bigtime in 'The Glass House'

By Nancy Griffin

"SOMETHING is not right," Leelee Sobieski playing Ruby, the young heroine in Columbia Picture's "The Glass House," says pleadingly to her attorney. Ruby's parents died recently in a car wreck, and now the guardians with whom she and her younger brother have been living are behaving suspiciously.

Helplessness

In this gripping suspense-thriller, 18-year-old Sobieski is portraying a young woman her own age, not older, for the first time in her career. Director Daniel Sackheim stands behind the camera, studying his leading lady intently.

At first, Sobieski underplays her helplessness and fear. "More eye contact," says Sackheim. He shoots several takes in quick succession, interrupting her repeatedly to ask for more emotion. "Good," he encourages. "Now stronger."

At one point, the actress becomes frustrated, tossing back her hair and furrowing her brow. "Let me do that gain—it sucked," she says. "Can I start from the beginning?"

Once Sackheim is satisfied, Sobieski bounds off the set to take a break in her trailer. Still growing at 5'10", she carries the top half of her body with regal grace, while her bottom half moves more awkwardly, as if she's still getting used to how long her legs are.

But when she starts to speak, she radiates preternatural poise and confidence beyond her years. How did the scene feel?

Adrenaline

"Good," she says lightly. Was she nervous? "Sure, but being nervous is good. It adds a little bit of a pulse, some adrenaline. If you're not nervous, it means you don't care if you fail."

Sobieski is best known for saving France in CBS's 1999 hit miniseries "Joan of Arc," which buried the theatrical version starring Milla Jovovich and earned her Emmy and Golden Globe nominations.

Now, she's raking in $1 million to carry "The Glass House," her first mainstream studio picture, supported by impressive veterans like Bruce Dern, Diane Lane, Stellan Skarsgard, Michael O'Keefe and Rita Wilson.

In little over a year, Sobieski has rocketed to the top of Hollywood's teenage A-list.

There is no other teen actor quite like her: a mesmerizing—at times disconcerting—screen presence, a woman-child who combines intensely analytical intelligence and sophistication with a dewy face and voluptuous body.

Sobieski is on the fast tack to inherit the Jodie Foster mantle but exudes more warmth and humor; with a dash of Streepish gravitas, she's got the heft to shoulder heavyweight roles.

DESTINY'S CHILD. Don't rely on synthesizers.

Top girl groups compared

By Noelani Torre

NOW that gender equality is more or less the norm, it's generally acknowledged that anything boys can do girls can do as well. (Whether the latter do it better is a matter of opinion.) This is certainly the case in the music industry, where boy bands share pop centerstage space with their happening sisters, girl groups.

Response

Seeing that girl groups have been attracting a lot of attention lately, we thought of asking viewers and listeners which one they considered to be the best. The two groups mentioned most were TLC and Destiny's Child. The Spice Girls and All Saints cropped up occasionally, but the first two eclipsed them altogether. Here are some of the responses to our query:

"TLC, of course. Their songs are unique, particularly 'Waterfalls' and 'No Scrubs.' They combine rap and singing beautifully, the transition is not awkward. In their lyrics, they use and create new metaphors.

"I like 'No Scrubs' because it expresses contempt towards all those male chauvinists out there. It shows guys that

TOP/ p. D2

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Aiza shows the way back to show biz fame and fortune

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

2001 was local show biz's most tragedy-hounded year, but it was also a year for some exceptionally successful and inspiring comebacks. Lose some, win some!

Topping the list of the year's comeback artists is Aiza Seguerra. The erstwhile TV-film moppet's career languished for years until, at age 17, she reinvented herself as a recording artist.

Her "Pagdating ng Panahon" single and album scored with listeners because her singing was simple, direct and unalloyed—in brave and radical contrast to the slick and phoney stylings of many pop singers these days.

In addition, she insisted on retaining her own persona and refused to be "repackaged" to suit the "image" requirements of the times. To be specific, she didn't want to get all dolled up and sold as yet another winsome chanteuse. She was tomboyish in real life, so that was how she was going to look and behave as a singer.

Some of her handlers feared that the public would reject that "unconventional" projection, but Aiza held her ground. Her honesty and forthrightness also held sway in the way her songs were arranged, and in their simple but felt lyrics.

Thus, "Pagdating ng Panahon" was different because it had honesty and integrity. All of its various elements were compatible with each other, and the listening public delighted in its unique approach.

The album hit platinum and made Aiza a sensation not just in the recording field, but also in live performances at big venues in Metro Manila, and all over the country. Even better, it revived the young comebacking star's TV-film career.

Best of all, Aiza's second spring in show biz has shown other talents that they don't have to "package" themselves into clones of more established luminaries in order to make it in entertainment.

SEGUERRA. The year's top comeback artist.

If more talents think like Aiza, the local show biz scene will be the richer for it, because we'll be getting performers who are not stereotypical and "manufactured," but one-of-a-kind singers and actors who have their own voice and heart.

'Spiderman'

For four decades now, the adventures of Spider-Man have been a staple of Marvel comic books, several novels and a top-rated TV series. This year, the popular fantasy hero will hit the big screen with Tobey Maguire in the title role.

Maguire plays orphan Peter Parker, who's bitten by a genetically altered spider, thus imbuing him with special powers and skills that he uses to solve crimes and thwart criminals.

Other leads include William Dafoe as Green Goblin and Kirsten Dunst as Mary Jane Watson, Peter's actress-girlfriend. For Spider-Man merchandising prospects, call Empire International at 722-4311.

SEATED from left, Evelyn del Rosario (PLDT), Gen. Honesto Isleta (Ret), Litz Santana (Quezon Power) and Karen Villanueva (Pfizer); Standing from left, Louie Banta (ICTSI), Chit Arce (GMA-7), Juris Soliman (Cemex Phil.), Lou de Guzman (CAP) and Knette Fernando (Grepalife).

Hats off to PRSP!

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

THE MEMBERS of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines sure know how to throw a party!

All disciples of the Mad Hatter, they created headgear with passion.

How else to account for Knette Fernando of Grepalife's oversized Katipunan *sambalilo*? There were jolly ladies in Santa's cap—Evelyn del Rosario of PLDT, Lou de Guzman of CAP, Helga Melgar of Holiday Inn-Manila and Rita Festin (ADB).

Vic del Fierro won the Most Colorful Hat award for his "349 Coalition" headgear. But it was Joel Palacios of the Social Security System who sported the most original hat, which when you took a closer look, turned out to have been inspired by the Mad Hatter's chapeau.

Grand prize

PRSP president Honesto Isleta won the grand prize with what appeared to be a hunting helmet festooned with Christmas accents and a fancy star.

Others who came with their summer hats were GMA 7's Chit Arce, Karen Villanueva (now with Pfizer), Litz Santana of Quezon Power, Bong Osorio of Campaigns and Grey, Girlie Gruet of PS Bank, Louie Banta of ICTSI, Ed Timbungco of Allied Bank, Malou Rosal of Dusit Hotel, PRSP's Ruth Sarmiento and Ayala's Tess Villacorta.

A raffle with impressive prizes highlighted the affair. Three new members were inducted: Helga Melgar, Rosanna Llenado of Worldprep, and Eliseo Tumbaga, partner in the Marbella International Business Consultancy.

SWITCHING CHANNELS

Shaina Magdayao entertains street kids

BY EDMUND L. SICAM

TV star Shaina Magdayao and other members of the cast of the film "Mga Batang Lansangan . . . Ngayon" will be at the Amoranto Stadium in Quezon City tomorrow, Jan. 6 to distribute gifts to streetchildren and provide musical entertainment for some 300 streetchildren and their relatives.

In the movie, Shaina plays a *carinderia* worker who makes friends with several streetchildren. They live on a property owned by two sisters (Sunshine Dizon and Joanna Gonzales). A rich businessman wants to buy the land from the sisters so he can build a mall but they don't want to sell because the kids will have no place to go. What the businessman doesn't tell Sunshine and Joanna is that there's gold buried in the property.

Bobby Andrews and Joko Diaz play angels sent from above to help the children. When their mission succeeds, they ask St. Michael to transform them into human beings but the head angel can only grant some of their requests.

"Batang Lansangan" was originally intended for the Metro Manila Film Festival but was a few points shy of making it to the seventh slot. It is now showing in several theaters.

Shyr Valdez is back

Shyr Valdez, who used to have a TV show on Channel 2 titled "I'm Shyr" plus a sitcom with Tonton Gutierrez is back in the country after spending six years in the US. Shyr is best remembered for her role in "Bulaklak ng City Jail" in 1984.

In 1991, she made three movies including "Target Maganto 2" with Ronnie Ricketts. She also embarked on a singing career which was cut short when she decided to go abroad to study fashion design.

It is, therefore, surprising to find out that the former actress is now involved in marketing E-Bookman, an electronic organizer with multiple applications including the ability to download eBooks as well as music. The gadget is a product of US-based Franklin Electronic Equipment.

Shyr says she doesn't even know how to turn on a computer. However, because E-Bookman is user-friendly, Shyr can operate it without much difficulty.

Top girl . . .

(From page D1)

girls aren't just there for the taking.

"They don't sing about tired, blah topics like love, romance, etc. If they do, they approach it from a different viewpoint. Also they have very distinctive and well-trained voices. Original MTVs, too.

"Another song, 'Unpretty,' boosts the average woman's self-confidence by debunking the things fashion and 'beauty' magazines claim to be truths. And it suggests turning the tables on men who support these claims—'make you feel unpretty, too' as it goes in the song.

I think that they are truer advocates of girl power than the Spice Girls ever hoped to be."—*Kat Quinto, Cagayan de Oro City*

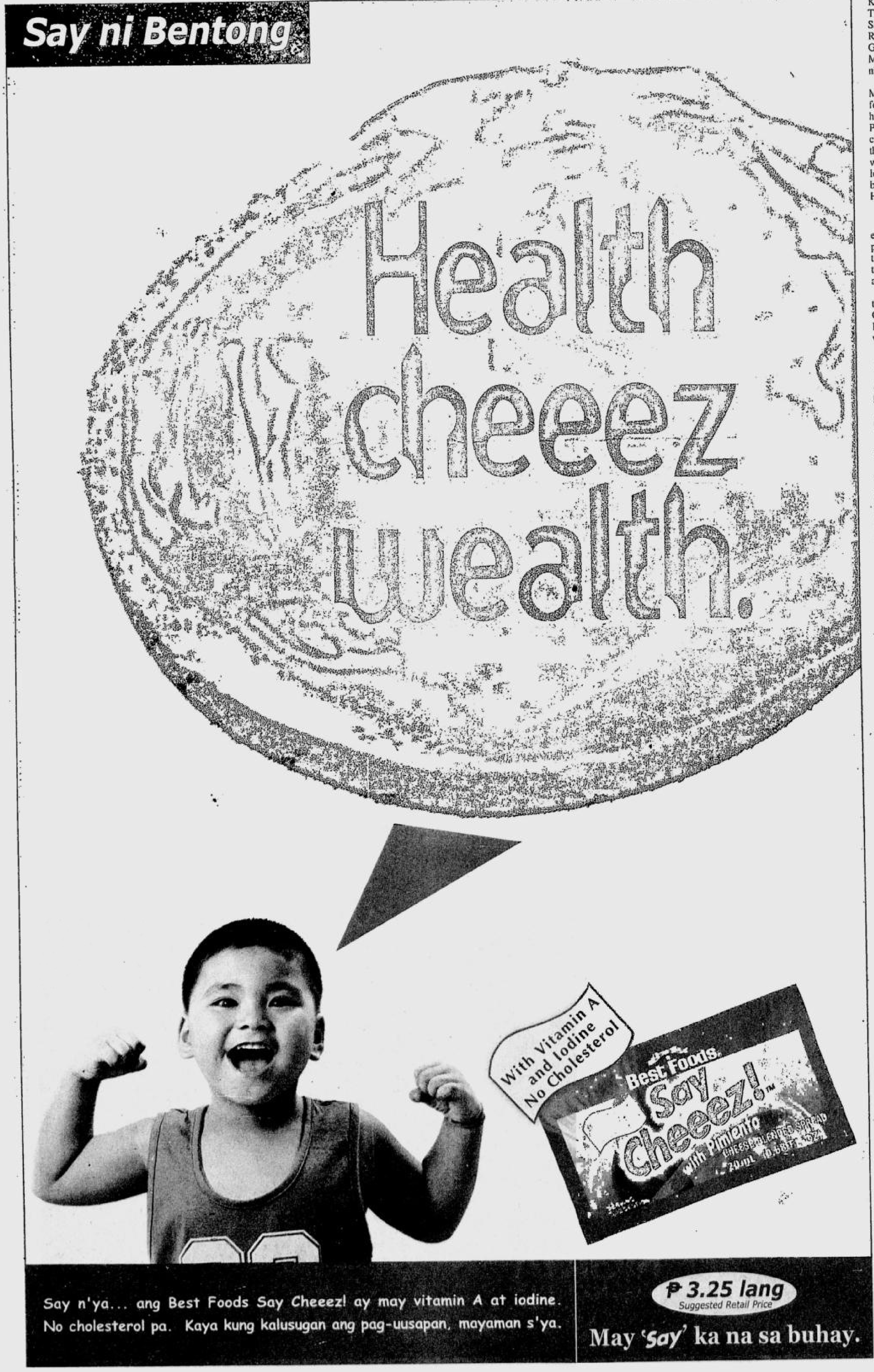
No technical tricks

"Destiny's Child. I judge groups *kasi* by how they sound live and Destiny's Child definitely sounds good. What you hear in the recording is what you'll hear in their concerts—better, even. They don't rely on synthesizers and technical tricks to make their voices sound good, unlike the Spice Girls or locally, the Eraserheads.

"They even sound jazzy sometimes. They know how to use their voices—how to blend, how to give texture, how to ground, etc. They're great dancers as well-*ang lambot ng katawan!* Even if they're not doing a serious dance number, if they're just grooving, say, they're always graceful. And sexy, definitely, and good-looking, too!

"They can take on any subject matter in any style. They have songs in the 'Charlie's Angels' soundtrack, Christmas songs, romantic songs, assertive songs, etc. And you can dance to any of those songs because their rhythm really makes you want to move."—*Jomar Escultura, Iloilo City*

(To be concluded)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Say n'ya... ang Best Foods Say Cheeez! ay may vitamin A at iodine. No cholesterol pa. Kaya kung kalusugan ang pag-uusapan, mayaman s'ya.
May 'Say' ka na sa buhay.

'Bagong Buwan' loses–and wins

By Nestor U. Torre

THE BIG movie news this week is the decision of the Metro Manila Filmfest's board of judges *not* to award the festival's Best Film prize to "Bagong Buwan" This strikes the movie's admirers as odd, if not suspicious.

However, if no member of the board of judges speaks up to bare what went on behind the scenes, the matter remains in the hazy realm of speculation.

That being the case at the moment, people who believe in the film have to take this latest disappointment with a pound of salt. Others, however, are not as easily subdued. If so, what's keeping them from expressing their dissenting opinion in the media? The trouble with viewers here is that they remain unaware of their power to change things.

Importance

That's why, we hope that, starting this new year, our viewers will see the importance of using their collective opinions to pressure movie people to do better work, in filmfests and otherwise.

Write those letters to columnists or to editors, participate in radio-TV polls, and above all, view only good movies—stay away from the quickies and the sleazies!

And, in this instance of the Metro filmfest awards, state why you disagree with the judges (or agree with them, for that matter). If enough people express the same opinion in the media one way or the other, that will make a statement that cannot be ignored.

For our part, we've seen the movies that vied for the filmfest's awards, and believe that "Bagong Buwan" deserved the top prize because it was the most substantial entry in the festival, and tackled an important issue that has been festering for centuries, preventing the Muslims in our country from joining the mainstream of our national life.

Speechifying

So, why didn't it win? If you believe that the majority of the jurors honestly thought that the movie was deficient, then you can cite what some people have criticized the movie for—too much bombast and speechifying, a one-sided view of the conflict in favor of the Muslims, dialogue-heavy scripting, etc.

Even if these criticisms were true, however, our feeling is that they would not have diminished the movie's chances of winning the top plum all that much, particularly because the other entries were even *more* deficient.

So, were there other factors involved? Are key industry people bent on "punishing" the movie's director, Marilou Diaz-Abaya, for her "sins"? If so, what would those "sins" be?

Well, Abaya has been accused of rocking the boat in pushing for reforms and of betraying the industry by exposing its ills during the "Live Show" controversy, among other perceived acts of commission and omission.

JERICHO Rosales plays an army lieutenant in the film.

But we're back to speculation. What *isn't* speculative, however, is the fact that "Bagong Buwan" has already succeeded in proving an important point: that Christians and Muslims in this country can come to a meeting of minds and hearts.

New pride

At theaters where this movie is shown, Christian and Muslim members of the audience have been so moved and changed by the film that some of them have been going out of their way to interact with one another. Muslims have new pride in themselves, and Christians have gained greater understanding of the complex Mindanao conflict—in *human* terms.

At the box-office, too, the film has proven a major point: that a serious movie about a controversial topic can become a big hit. This is a key achievement that goes beyond this production's scope, because it will encourage producers to bankroll *other* significant movies that will further enlighten our viewers about themselves and the world they live in.

Even if "Bagong Buwan" didn't win the top prize at the Metro filmfest, its achievements as healer and trendsetter are even greater rewards for its makers' courage and commitment. Its fate at the filmfest shows how a beleaguered production can lose in the awards derby—but ultimately win big. The film and its viewers have spoken.

AM/FM

Propriety and taste needed in listener-friendly shows

By Rito P. Asilo

RADIO shows greeted the first day of the New Year auspiciously, with DJs stressing a uniformly hopeful and upbeat outlook for one and all.

The mood was festive. This was evident when we tuned in to DJ Martin D's "Request Express" radio program (dwRR 101.9 FM) before noontime.

Different

We noted the station's listener-friendly format that was different from the usual on-air relationship between FM DJs and listeners. In the usual set-up, FM radio hosts usually have a superior, if not uppity, air, and draw a distinct line between them and their listeners.

dwRR has proved that this line can be eliminated, judging from the number of listeners who called in to make requests, greet people or simply chat with the host like he was a next-door neighbor.

But some callers became so amiable that they forgot propriety and good taste. Masked in friendly banter, one caller (who was obviously hung-over from the previous night's revelry), when asked, "*Nagpaputok ka ba* last night?," answered, "*Hindi. Ibang paputok ang alam ko, e!*"

Even Martin D himself had a peculiar question for his women listeners. In jest, he asked, "For the ladies out there, it's already 2002, *ayaw nyo pa rin bang magkaroon ng Papa?*" to which a woman listener answered, "*Ayokong maging matandang dalaga*—'for life!'"

Catchphrase

For those not familiar with the station, "For life" is its catchphrase. Corny, if you ask us. Though it was nice to listen to Jolina Magdangal's voice on the station's jingle. Trust this girl to come up with more than passable vocals, just forget her kitschy outfits.

On this show, listeners can request any song they wish to listen to, from the Backstreet Boys' "Drowning," to Vina Morales' breathy version of "Pangako Sa 'Yo."

On the show, we also heard popular songs from different musical genres. We were surprised to hear Linkin Park's alternative rock single, the catchy "In the End" (a classy number which is climbing Billboard's charts, presently at number 15—with a bullet!) alongside Lou Bega's "Angelina" ("Eat Bulaga" viewers largely associate this tune with the noontime show's increasingly popular Sex Bomb Dancers), culled from his "Ladies and Gentlemen" album; Westlife's "Queen of My Heart;" a jumpy version of "Tiny Bubbles;" a hip-hop/rap version of Paul Williams' "We've Only Just Begun" (yes, rap! What will they think of next? A drum-drowned R and B version of "My Way"? Maybe a hip-hop version of "The Way We Were"? Or "Nessun Dorma," rap-styled?!) ***(To be concluded)***

Sharon Cuneta turns a year older

By Ricky T. Gallardo

MEGASTAR Sharon Cuneta turns 36 tomorrow, perhaps with no material needs to wish for anymore. Cuneta has been blessed all her life, and she has learned to channel her blessings to make others feel blessed, too.

On her Sunday evening show tomorrow, Sharon will be feted with a birthday bash by her staff. Expect her closest family members and friends to share her big day.

Now that Baby Frankie has turned one, we wouldn't be surprised if, after Sharon stages her comeback concert this summer, she'll be ready for another bundle of joy before her next birthday. Have a great year!

One award less?

After the unnecessary show of conceit and sourgraping by Cesar Montano at the recent Metro filmfest awards ceremonies, the actor and his comrades might frown again when news reaches them that one of the awards "Bagong Buwan" got might just be recalled due to certain technicalities.

You see, the film won the Best Original Theme Song trophy for Joey Ayala's hauntingly beautiful "Walang Hanggang Paalam," which was composed way back in 1983. In short, the song wasn't created specifically for "Bagong Buwan," it was merely adapted for the movie.

For a song to win the Best Original Theme Song award, it has to be specifically written for the movie. So, "Bagong Buwan" may have to return the award.

Gina Alajar hospitalized

Giña Alajar fainted just before New Year's Eve so she had to be rushed to St. Luke's Hospital. Alajar, who has been dealing with acute anemia for sometime now, had a hemoglobin count that plunged way below the normal level, so she had to have immediate blood transfusion.

Before the clock struck 12, she already had four bags of new blood in her system, so she was her jolly self again in no time at all.

What made her recuperate fast was the thought that the people who mattered were all there to keep her company.

On the first hour of 2002, her three big boys Ryan, Jeff and AJ, good friends Amy Austria-Ventura and husband Duke, Fanny Serrano and Maila Gumila were around to welcome the new year with her. Prior to that, Anna Marin, who just got married to construction executive Jing Espiritu, also came over to wish Alajar well. We also learned that Alajar's estranged husband Michael de Mesa dropped by the first night she was admitted.

Alajar has been discharged from the hospital and hopes that the new year will bring her and her family 365 days of perfect health.

Martin's precious gift

One of the best gifts we got last Christmas was a special CD from Martin Nievera titled "My Heart's Song (for NYC and the world)."

The CD contained just one song, which President Gloria Arroyo brought with her when she went to the United States a few months ago.

Martin drew inspiration from a little boy in a wheelchair on Oprah Winfrey's show, who offered his book of poetry, "Heart's Song," as his small contribution to world peace. He dedicated his song to all the heroes of the Sept. 11 tragedies.

We've listened to the song a few times and we like it—very hopeful, positive, soothing to the soul. Thank you, Martin, for music that heals.

Greenhills Theater reborn

The classic Greenhills Theater recently got a major facelift, courtesy of Precy Florentino, who also owns our favorite concert venue, Music Museum.

With a soft opening during Christmas Day, two new cinemas joined other theaters in the metropolis as homes for the Metro filmfest movies. We took time to try out the cinemas and we were very impressed. Both 255-seater cinemas have state-of-the-art facilities, complete with digital surround-sound systems, wall-to-wall carpeting from Italy, first-rate toilets, even comfort zones for the physically challenged.

Aside from the cinemas, the Greenhills Theater mall has food and beverage outlets, specialty shops and free parking.

IT'S BACK!
Nestle
FAMILY Breakaway
Only One Wrapper to Win!
CONGRATULATIONS! GRAND DRAW WINNERS!
1 Fly Away. Drive Away Showcase
GMA/Luzon – Winnie Quizon / Bamban, Tarlac
Vis/Min – Herbert Y. Te / Davao City
Teen Dream Showcase 2
GMA/Luzon – Antonile Magtoto / Nueve Ecija
Vis/Min – Iluminada Julie Goking / Cagayan de Oro
3 KIDDIE Techno SHOWCASE
GMA/LUZ– Marivic Aragon / Sorsogon • Frederick I. Anciano / Proj. 3 Q.C
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One Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos only
GMA/LUZ–Reynaldo S. Soriano / Binalonan, Pangasinan
VIS/MIN– Cheryl S. Tabobo / Barrio Obrero, Iloilo City
We have just concluded another successful Nestle Family Breakaway.
Thanks to all those who participated. And for yet another exciting promo treat,
join the ongoing Nestle New Year New You! promo
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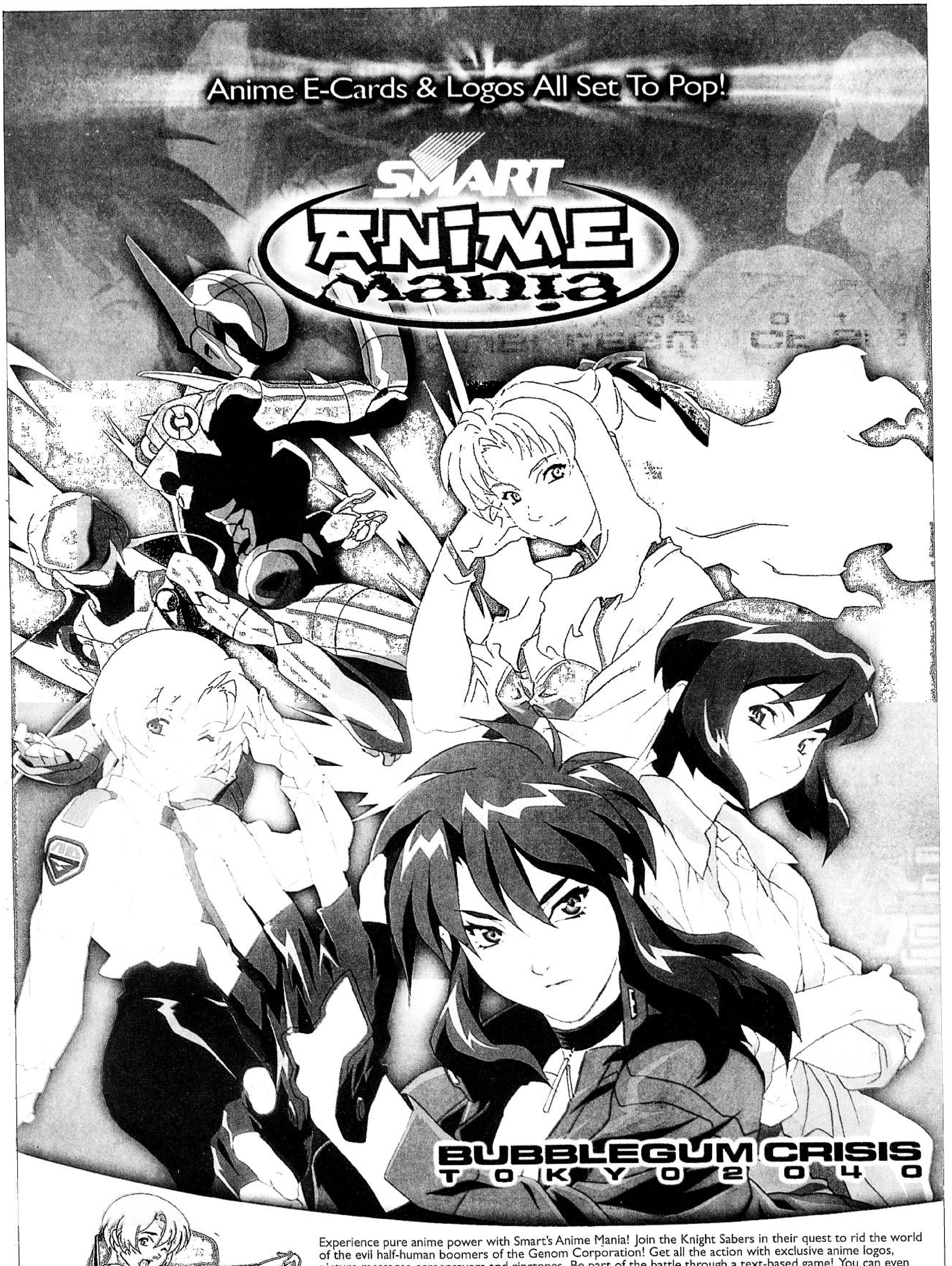

Experience pure anime power with Smart's Anime Mania! Join the Knight Sabers in their quest to rid the world of the evil half-human boomers of the Genom Corporation! Get all the action with exclusive anime logos, picture messages, screensavers and ringtones. Be part of the battle through a text-based game! You can even build on the fun by inviting friends to be part of the anime circle!

To join, key in **JOIN ANIME** and send to **235**. (Once a member you can download exclusive anime logos, pics and ringtones)
To invite a friend, key in **INVITE** <friend's Smart phone number> (You can invite up to 3 friends per message.)
To play the game, key in **PLAY ANIME** and send to **235**.

bclogo
<picture message/screensaver>

bclogo 1
<logo/group graphic>

bclinnawink
<picture message/screensaver>

bclinna
<logo/group graphic>

bcnenecute
<picture message/screensaver>

To Get Bubble Gum Crisis...	Key In...
Logo List of Keywords	LOGO BC and send to 235
Logos*	LOGO <keyword> and send to 235
Group Graphics List of Keywords	GROUP BC and send to 235
Group Graphics*	GROUP <keyword> and send to 235
Picture Messages List of Keywords	PIC BC and send to 235
Picture Messages	PIC <keyword> and send to 235
Screen Savers List of Keywords	SAVER BC and send to 235
Screen Savers**	SAVER <keyword> and send to 235
Help on the Commands	HELP and send to 235

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 2002 ◆ 12 PAGES ◆ VOLUME 6, NUMBER 14

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- **Billy Gilman Fan** Page 5
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- **Poet Genaro R. Gojo Cruz** Page 9

Things are Looking up for 5 and UP

Your favorite kiddie TV show just beat the Disney-ESPN in the 2001 Asian Television Awards

BY ELINE SANTOS

YOU'VE watched them rappel off a bridge. They have gone undercover to expose the sale of alcohol and cigarettes to minors.

They have met children from tribal communities in Mindanao, ridden an elephant in Thailand, and interviewed politicians such as former President Fidel Ramos and Sen. Edgardo Angara.

Every Sunday at 9:30 am, "5 and Up" reporters take us to different places to do different things and meet different people. It's a fun, informative adventure! Majority of the 5 and Uppers says traveling and making new friends are the best part of their job.

Better than Disney!

Reporters Peter Bjerner, Frances Fleta and Chiyomi Rances made new Amerasian or American-Asian friends in the episode "Tulay ng Kulay." The show won as the best youth program in the Asian TV Awards held on Dec. 4, 2001.

For giving voice to the Amerasian youth, "5 and Up" bested the Disney Channel and ESPN Junior X Games II, which was the runner up.

"*Nagulat lang ako,*" chatty 16-year-old Chiyomi describes her first reaction to the good news.

Discrimination

"Tulay ng Kulay" is about the experiences of Paul, Tracy, Jaime, Tulip, Mark, David, Kevin, Ronnie, Michelle and Ollie. These young people are a mixture of American and Asian (Filipino) descent.

Before the Senate voted the Americans out of Clark and Subic in 1992, American soldiers were a common sight in Olongapo. Some of these soldiers had children with Filipino women. Sadly, many of these Amerasian children were abandoned.

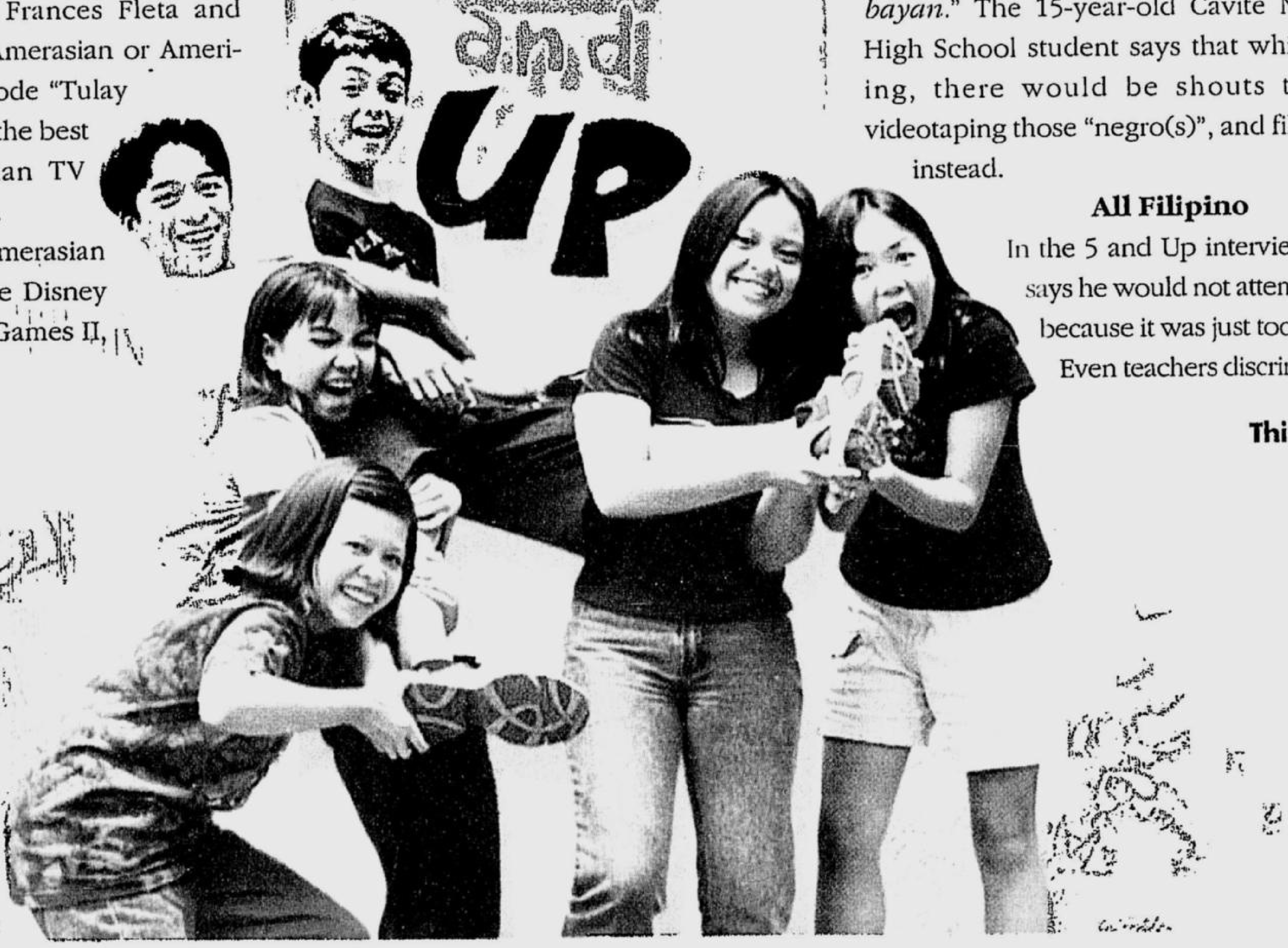
Chiyomi, Peter and Frances saw firsthand how people can be cruel to Amerasians.

Peter relates that they were called by painful names like "*singaw*" *and* "*lason ng bayan.*" The 15-year-old Cavite National High School student says that while filming, there would be shouts to stop videotaping those "negro(s)", and film them instead.

All Filipino

In the 5 and Up interview Jaime says he would not attend school because it was just too painful. Even teachers discriminated

Things/p.4



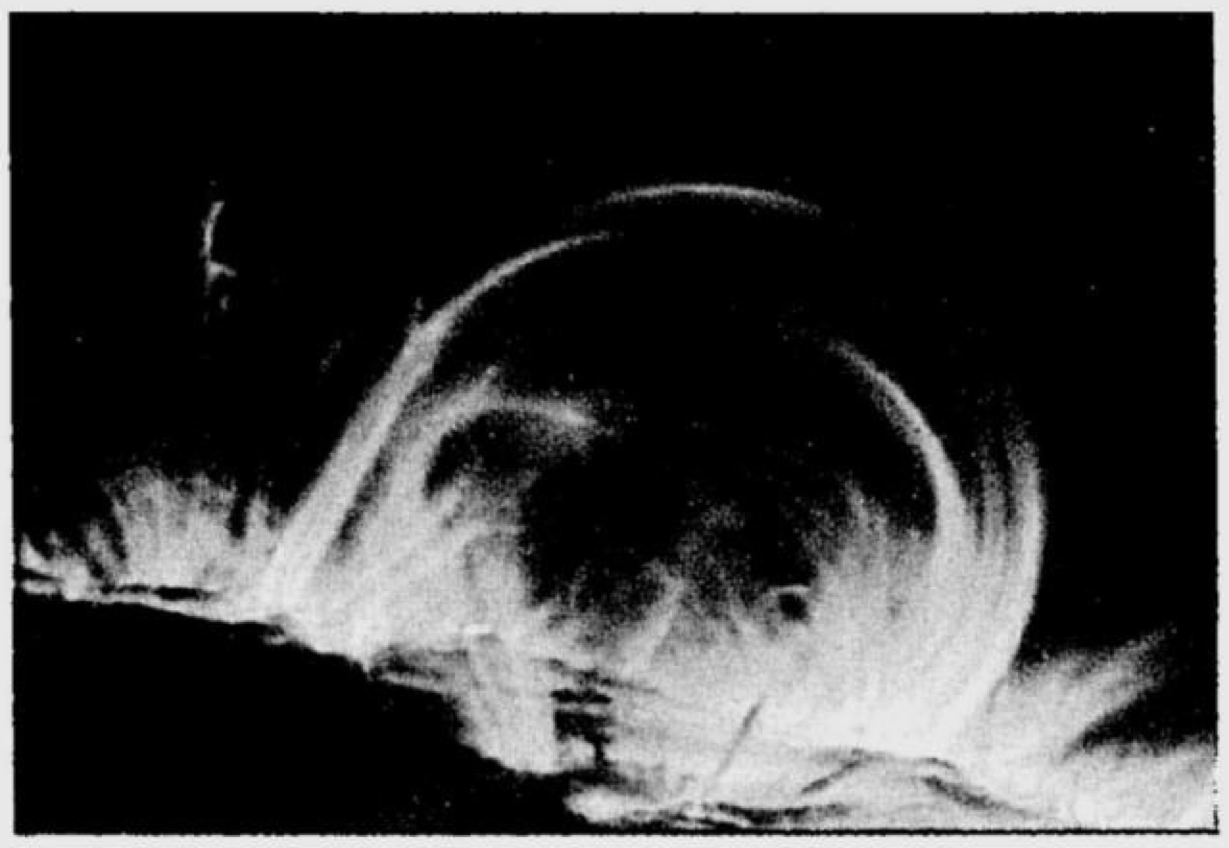
CARE FOR A SHOE SANDWICH?
5 and Uppers have fun offcam. The mural behind them was done with teamwork—just like the show!

JOANBONDOC

WORLD SCOPE

Rare Book of Rhyme

THIS is a one of only two known copies of a nursery rhyme book named "Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book." The small book was published around 1744 and is 257 years old. It will be auctioned at Bonhams, central London, and is expected to fetch around £6,000 or P160 million. ***AP***



Super Solar Storms

THIS view of the Sun shows activity above large areas of stormy solar activity, called active regions, which have a much more complex structure than was previously thought. NASA's Transition Region and Coronal Explorer (TRACE) spacecraft caught these coils of hot, electrified gas. The loops are more than 482,790 kilometers high and capable of spanning 30 Earths. ***AP***

London, England
Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Gauhati, India

Klava's Caring

AREN'T mommy dogs amazing? In some past issues we featured photos of dogs who've adopted baby animals of another species afte their own mothers abandoned them. Here we have Klava, a stray dog, who has adopted a Siberian tiger cub named Prince. Klava nursed Prince after his own mother ignored him. Klava suckled Prince for 30 days and officials say the cub is now out of danger. ***AP***

Music in the Dark

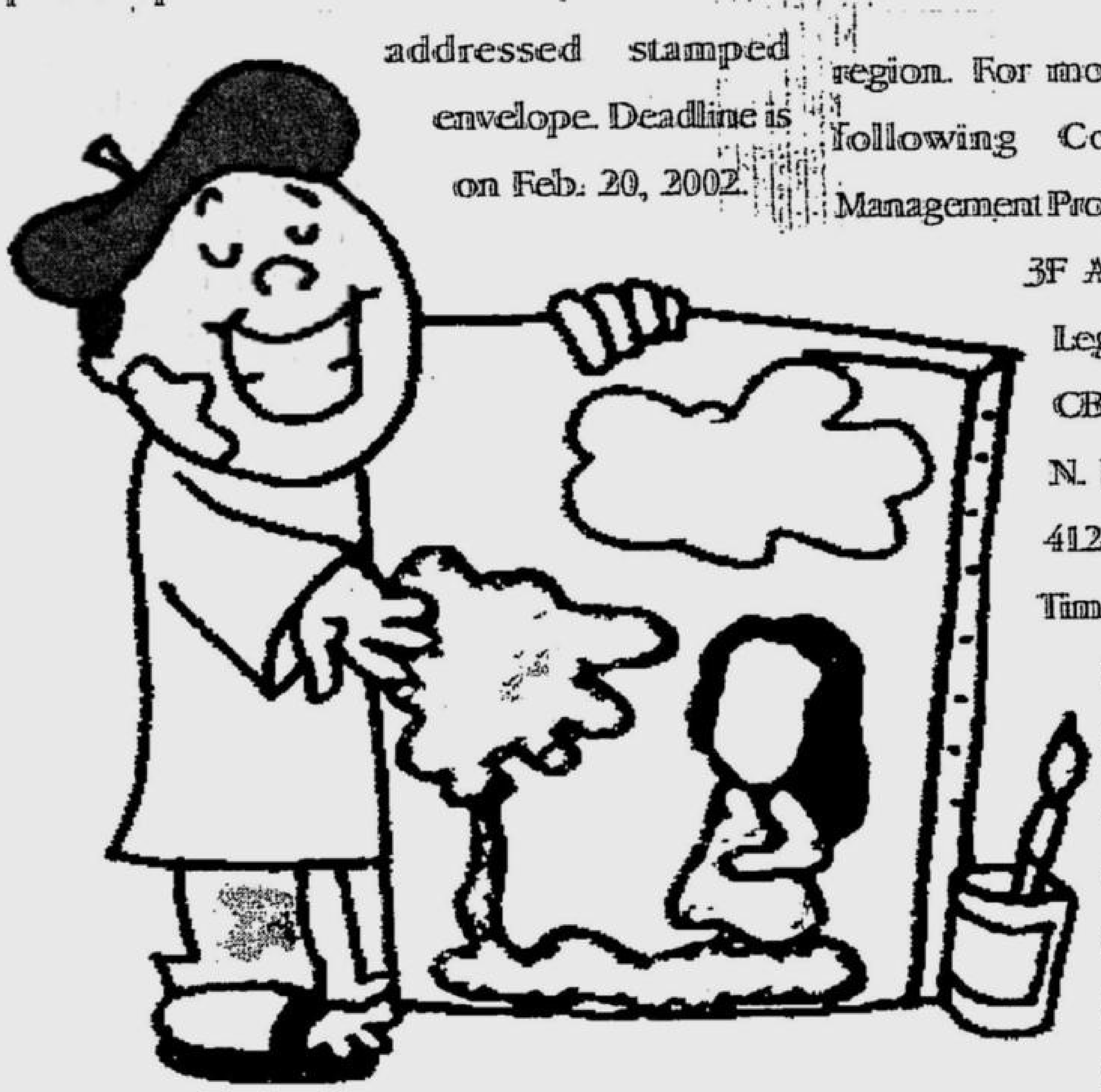
YOUNG Robin Hemrona plays the *tablas*, an Indian type of drum, at the Jyoti Niketan School. Anything related to music appears to be the first choice of the students of Jyoti Niketan, a school for blind children up to age 15. ***AP***

By Marlet D. Salazar

Got something for Out There? Send us the info two weeks in advance. Our fax numbers are 897-4793 up to 94. Don't forget to include your contact numbers and addresses.

Workshops

FREE WRITING WORKSHOP. A free workshop on creative writing is open for public school students ages 10-16. Workshop starts on April 2002. Complete the following requirements and send to P.O. BOX 355, Pasay City Central Post Office, Pasay City: a photocopy of your school I.D., your teacher's recommendation, photocopies of written works, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Deadline is on Feb. 20, 2002.



Contests

PBBY POSTER. The Philippine Board on Books for Young People is now accepting design proposals for the 2002 NCBD poster. The guiding theme is "Salamat sa Libro,' Abot Ko ang Mundo." The winning design will be chosen by the board and their comments for finalizing the poster will be given to the winning designer. Entries must be received by PBBY Secretariat not later than 5 p.m. on Feb. 15, 2002. For more important details call up 372-3548 , send an email to pbby@adarna.com.ph, or drop by their office at 73-A Scout Limbaga St., Brgy. Laging Handa, Quezon City.

KID-KALIKASAN. Join the "Kabundukan, Ilog at Dagat Kalikasan" poster making contest. Contestants must be 7-12 years old, residents of Bicol, Eastern and Central Visayas, or in the Caraga region. For more important info call up the following Community-Based Resource Management Project office near you: CBRMP-Bicol 3F ANST. Bldg., Washington Drive, Legazpi City, tel. (052) 481-4562; CBRMP-Central Visayas 5F BF Bldg. N. Escario St., Cebu City, tel. (032) 412-6745; CBRMP-Eastern Visayas 2F Timo Romano Bldg., Real St. Sagkahan District, Tacloban City, tel. (053) 321-1388; CBRMP-Caraga 3F Aguilar Bldg. Pili Drive, Butuan City, tel. (085) 815-0320; and CBRMP-Central Office 7F EDPC Bldg., Department of Finance, BSP Complex, Roxas Blvd. Malate, Manila, tel. (02) 526-7335, 523-6325 or send an email to folay@info.com.ph

TEEN LIT CAMP. Adarna House and Filipinas Heritage Library invite teens ages 13-16 to submit their works in fiction, essay or poetry and vie for a slot in the 2nd Annual Teen Lit Camp. It is week-long out-of-town camp for teen writers, discussions, and otehr activities related to writing. For details call up 372-3548.

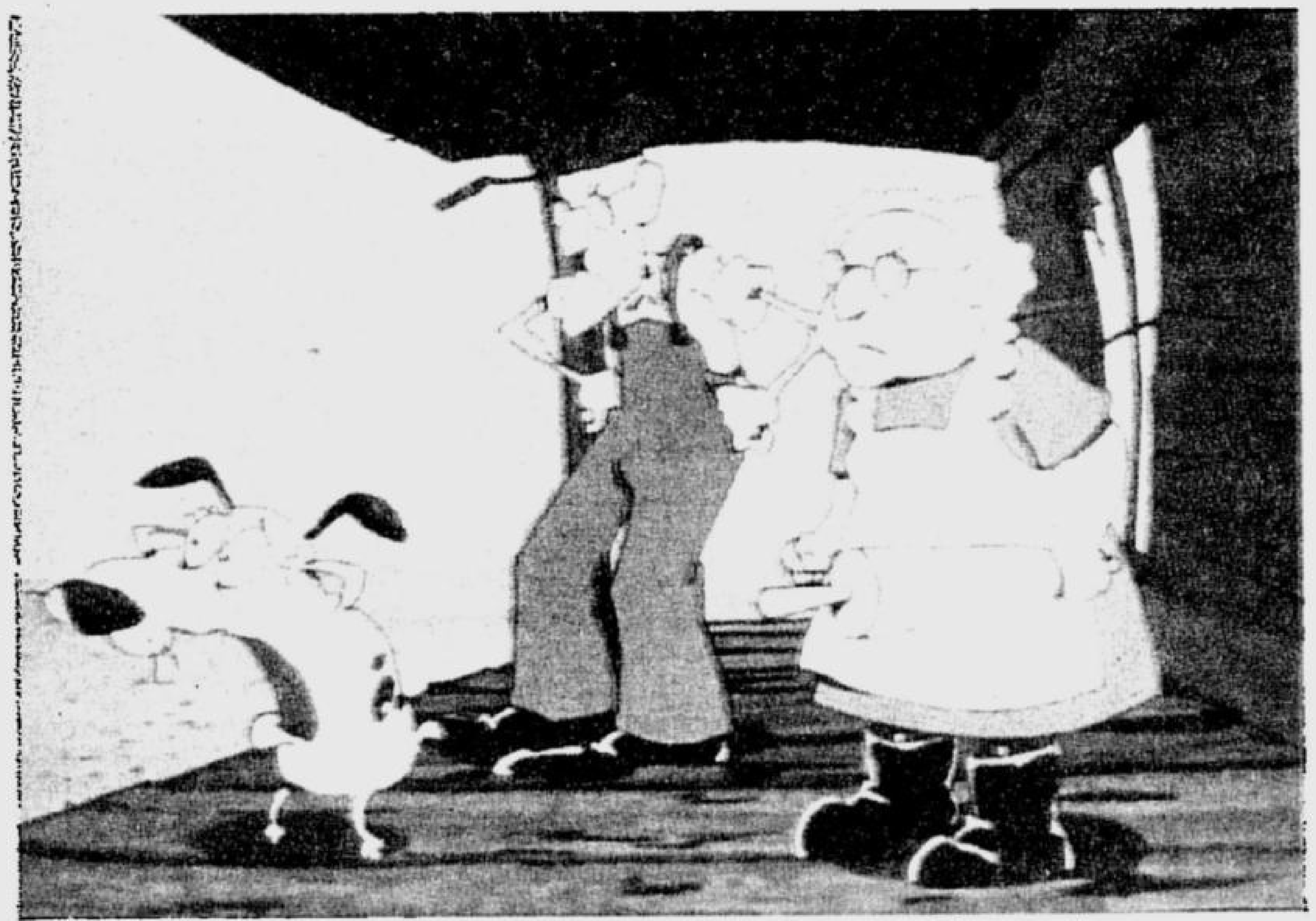
Activities

PIXIE BIRTHDAY. Spend your birthday in the magical Pixie Village. Choose among these four party themes: The Elfin Wave Adventure, Fairy's Wheel of Fun Party, Carousel Party and Fly High birthday party. Pixie Forest is an indoor fantasy amusement center for kids and their families. For info call up 850-3568.

Cable Picks

KNOWLEDGE CHANNEL. Knowledge Channel, an all education channel on cable TV in the country., is now being offered to private schools in Metro Manila. While Sky Foundation has prioritized cabling public schools nationwide since its launch in 199, Knowledge Channel provides a vast array of curriculum-based programs for classroom instruction and supplemental source of information for students and teachers. For more details call up 631-4349 or send email to sfi@sky.pinoycentral.com

COURAGE'S ADVENTURES. Because of her rare blood type, Muriel is kidnapped and taken to a Hair Farm to be used for growing hair. Courage and the Farmer track her down at the Hair Farm, only to find out it is run by the Farmer's mother. Together they must find a way to rescue her. Catch the adventure on "Courage the Cowardly Dog" tonight at 6 on Cartoon Network.



WATCH "Courage The Cowardly Dog" on Cartoon Network.

Things are looking up for 5 & Up

(from page 1)

against them in their grades, Chiyomi tells us.

They would play at night so they would not be seen and jeered at, recalls Peter.

Remembering the experience sends Chiyomi into just anger. "What's their point?" she asks in exasperation. To the 16-year-old UP high school student, the discrimination does not make any sense because, "We are all Filipino."

Chiyomi herself has Japanese blood; Peter is a Swede-Pinoy mix. There is no such thing as a "pure" Filipino anyway. We are a blend of Spanish, American, Malay and Chinese blood, among others.

Peter thinks the discrimination springs from envy. "They look more cool. They look like artists from other places."

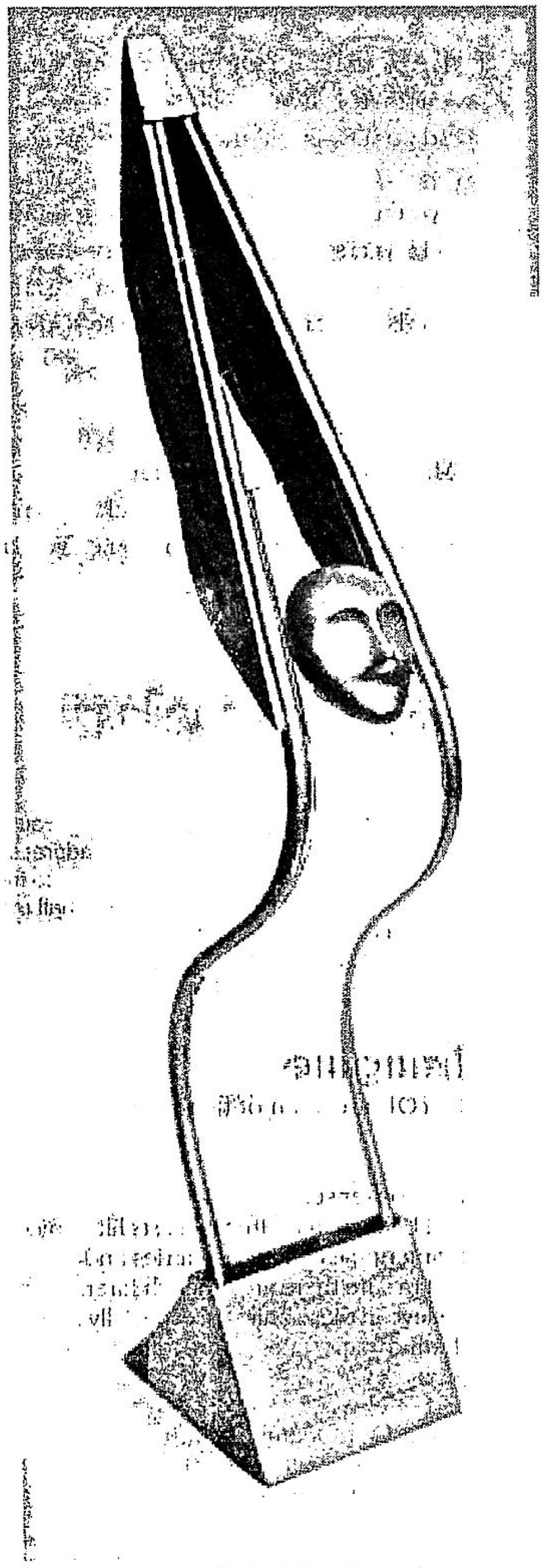
Chiyomi says it's insecurity. "Why not try to get to know them?" she asks.

Well, thanks to the show, we have glimpse of the Amerasian youth. For being the bridge of color to their world, this Filipino production is counted among the best in Asia.

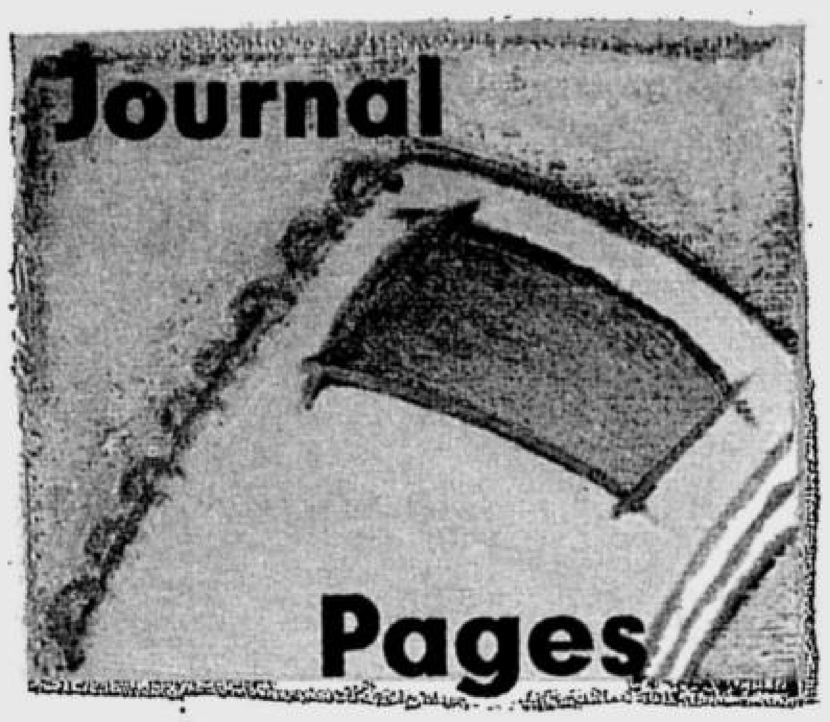
Way to go 5 and Up!

WHAT'S MY LINE? "5 and Up" reporters Chiyomi Rances, Frances Fleta and Peter Reyes rehearse their lines with producer Marj Mosuva for their award-winning episode "Tulay Ng Kulay." DATA TOLENTINO

UNITED COLORS OF "TULAY NG KULAY." The "5 and Up" reporters blend in with the Amerasian teens and Wedpro volunteers. DATA TOLENTINO



WOW! The Asian Television Awards statuette. Ain't it pretty?



Journal Pages

One Voice

BY PRISMA DIYOSA ESPINA
ST. ANNE DE BEAUPRE SCHOOL, QUEZON CITY

I LEARNED about him from my sister and my mother. I didn't really know him or even heard about him till they told me. When they say he had a very good voice, I was interested. But when I learned that he was just a kid like me (13 years old), I became very interested. After I saw his first video on MTV, I was like stunned! His voice was no one else's! You may wanna know by now whom I'm talking about. He's Billy Gilman. He just turned 13 and guess what, he's had his own CD recorded.

After seeing his second video, my mother, my sister and I thought we should buy his album. So we did. When we got home, we played it over and over again. We liked him that much. If our player was alive, it would slap us on the face and say, "Enough! Enough! I'm tired already!"

We heard it for the hundredth time already and we were talking about his unbelievably beautiful voice. And after listening for a hundred times more, I realized something. Billy's just a kid and he has already accomplished one great and right thing.

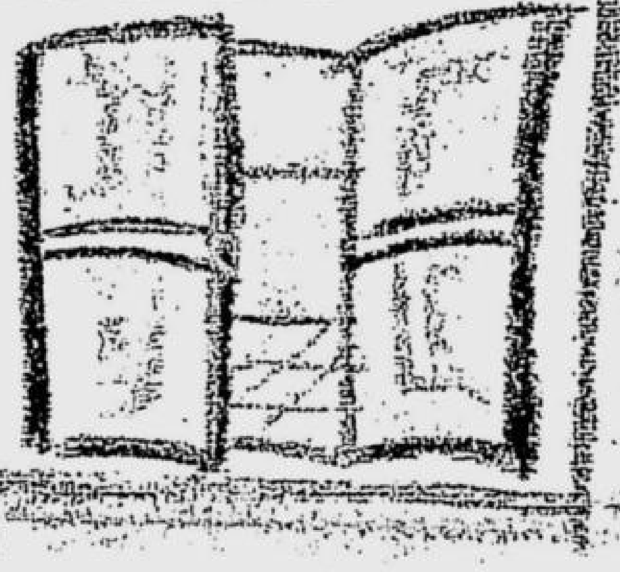
Nowadays, many kids lose hope in whatever they would like to reach. Some may dream of something not very good for them. Well, Billy stood out—maybe he never stopped trying and reaching out for this good thing. And I hope his courage doesn't go to waste. I just hope that everyone would do too.

Editor's Note: *Billy Gilman is a 13-year-old American country music singer. He's the youngest artist to ever be nominated for an Academy of Country Music Award in the United States. For more information, check out http://www.billygilmanfansite.com/*

Sound Familiar ?
Write down your thoughts now and send them to JI. Who knows, you might just get published!

Straight from JI Readers

You can now reach us via e-mail! Our address is **ji@inquirer.com.ph** Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and your phone number. Hope to hear from you soon!



Imagine

IF YOU are a fan of fiction books about mythical beasts, you're in a big surprise! For adults, mythical beasts are just things from a child's imagination. Some of them think it is nonsense.

I believe in mythical beasts like unicorns, yeti, flying horses, dragons, fairies and many more.

I'm sure there are other children elsewhere who believe in these animals, especially after reading about them in fairy tales. Some, after growing up, don't believe in these animals anymore.

In our life it is important to have imagination. Without it our world would be dull and lifeless.

So I want to thank all the authors who write books of fairy tales and mythical beasts. Without them, I wouldn't be writing this long letter.—**DEBORAH BAYBAY, 11, Miriam College, Quezon City**

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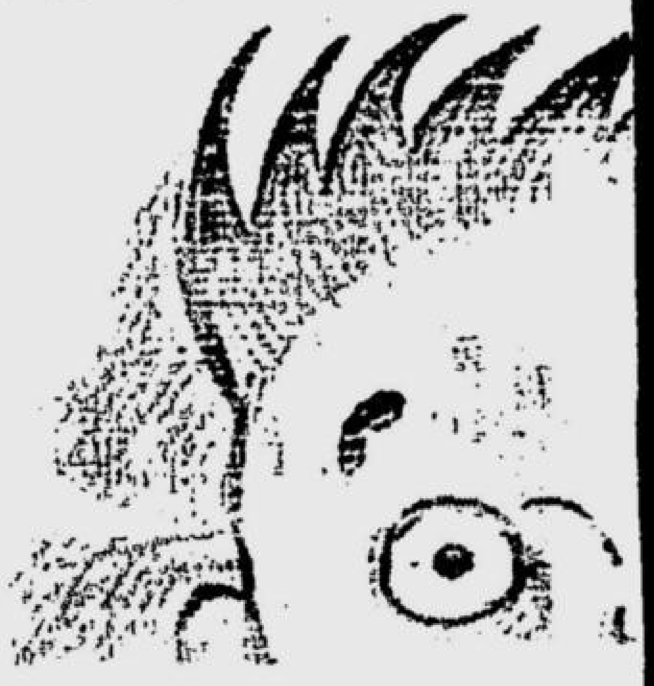
Uté, the Fearful Chil

Jose Rizal tells his nephews and nieces a funny story about a stinky and fretful little bo



Story by J.E. Royeca
Art by Christine P. Sipin

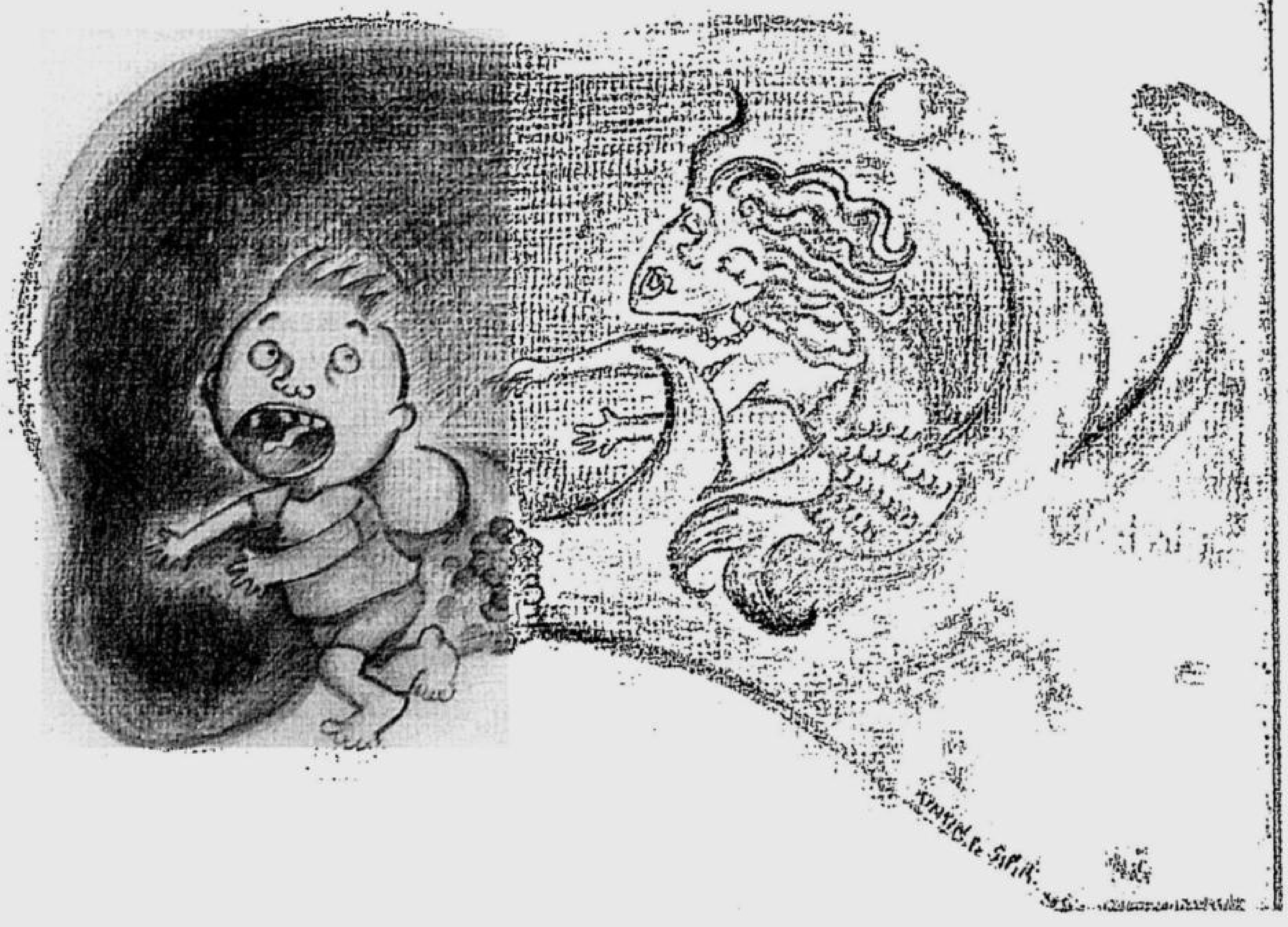
THE LITTLE children gathered in the *azotea* because their *Tio* Jose would tell them a story that af would like to hear another story from him. He had just returned to the Philippines last August 1887 very far country in Europe. He finished his studies there and was now a medical doctor.

"I like *Tio* Jose's stories," Emilio told his sister Angelica, brothers Leoncio and Antonio, and cousins Delfi Alfredo, Adela, Aristeo, and Cesar.

"Me too," agreed Delfina. "The last time he told us a story was about that horrible *tikbalang* who took children taking walks at night."

"Yes!" Angelica said fearfully.

Doña Teodora, their *lola,* got out of the door leading to the *azotea,* bringing huge trays with *buko* juice, cooked *saba,* and *ginatan* with the help of a servant.



"He stunk on Tuesdays and Fridays... such were the days when the *malignos* took baths"

"Have your *meryenda,* children," she sai

"Thank you, *lola,"* they replied.

"Your *lolo* doesn't want any noise in house so behave," Doña Teodora said. " *lola,"* they all answered. "We are all behav Jose had come down to the *azotea.*

"Good afternoon!" he greeted every *"Tio* Jose!" the children shouted, runn toward him.

"Alright, children," Dona Teodora said. " your seats and listen to your *Tio* Jose…A and the servant left them.

Everyone took their seats. While munchin they prepared to listen to their *Tio* Jose. J facing them. He looked at the *azotea* first w across their orchard that was full of fruit-bea flowers, birds, and animals.

"This story is about a little boy named Ut story. "One supper, he refused to take his told him that if he would not eat, a frightfu suddenly appear on the table and *nuno-sa-punso* would jump out of the anth and take him away."

Jose continued narrating that because of had become afraid of eating in the *azotea,* light, especially when the winds were blow dancing. He had also become superstitio

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ernoon. They
from Spain, a

n, Concepcion,

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Yes,
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Settle down. Take
nd behave." She

g their *meryenda,*
ose took his seat,
hich was situated
ring trees, plants,

," Jose began his
neal so his *yaya*
l *aswang* would
smash it, or a
ill where it lived

hose stories, Uté
under the moon-
ing and the trees
is—one who al-

ways believed in feared but only imagined things.

When he heard from a neighbor, an old hag, that it was bad to take baths on Tuesdays and Fridays because such were the days in which the *malignos* took baths, he never really took baths on these days. That toothless old hag added that if one took baths on Tuesdays and Fridays regularly, he too would become a dreaded *maligno.*

He had also heard that when the flowers of *dapdap* trees became red, giant crabs would roam all over the town and destroy houses. He had also known that when cats' eyes became very black and full, mermaids and *siokoys* would emerge from the seas to take away children and bring them to their kingdom at the depths of the oceans. He had also heard stories that when it breezed though it was sunny, the *malignos, aswangs, kapres, tikbalangs,* and *nunos* had all come out of where they lived to take baths under "sunny rain."

Because of all these stories, Uté had become a fearful child He didn't want to come out of their house already. What if there were some mermaids and *siokoys* out there to snatch him? Or giant crabs might crush him?

He stunk on Tuesdays and Fridays since he refused to take baths on these days because such were the days when the *malignos* took baths. He didn't want to become a *maligno.*

"One afternoon, Ute's *nanay* said: 'Ute, your cousins and friends are calling you outside'," *Tio* Jose narrated.

"Nanay, can't you see it's breezing," Ute said by the window.

His *nanay* looked outside. There was a mild breeze and it was sunny. She said, "So?"

"The *malignos, aswangs, kapres, tikbalangs,* and *nunos!"* Uté said fearfully. "They have come out and are now playing in the 'sunny rain' !"

His *nanay* laughed at him. "It's not true, Uté, it's only a story."

Ute didn't mind what she said. "Look, my cat's eyes are very black and full! Mermaids and *siokoys* must be out there now! And the *dapdap* trees," Uté pointed those trees in the plaza, "they have red flowers now. What about the giant crabs?"

"Uté, you're getting pale now because you don't come out of the house anymore. Don't believe those stories. Now, I'd like you to get out and join your cousins and friends Can't you see them? They're enjoying and playing in the breeze!"

"But *nanay,*—"

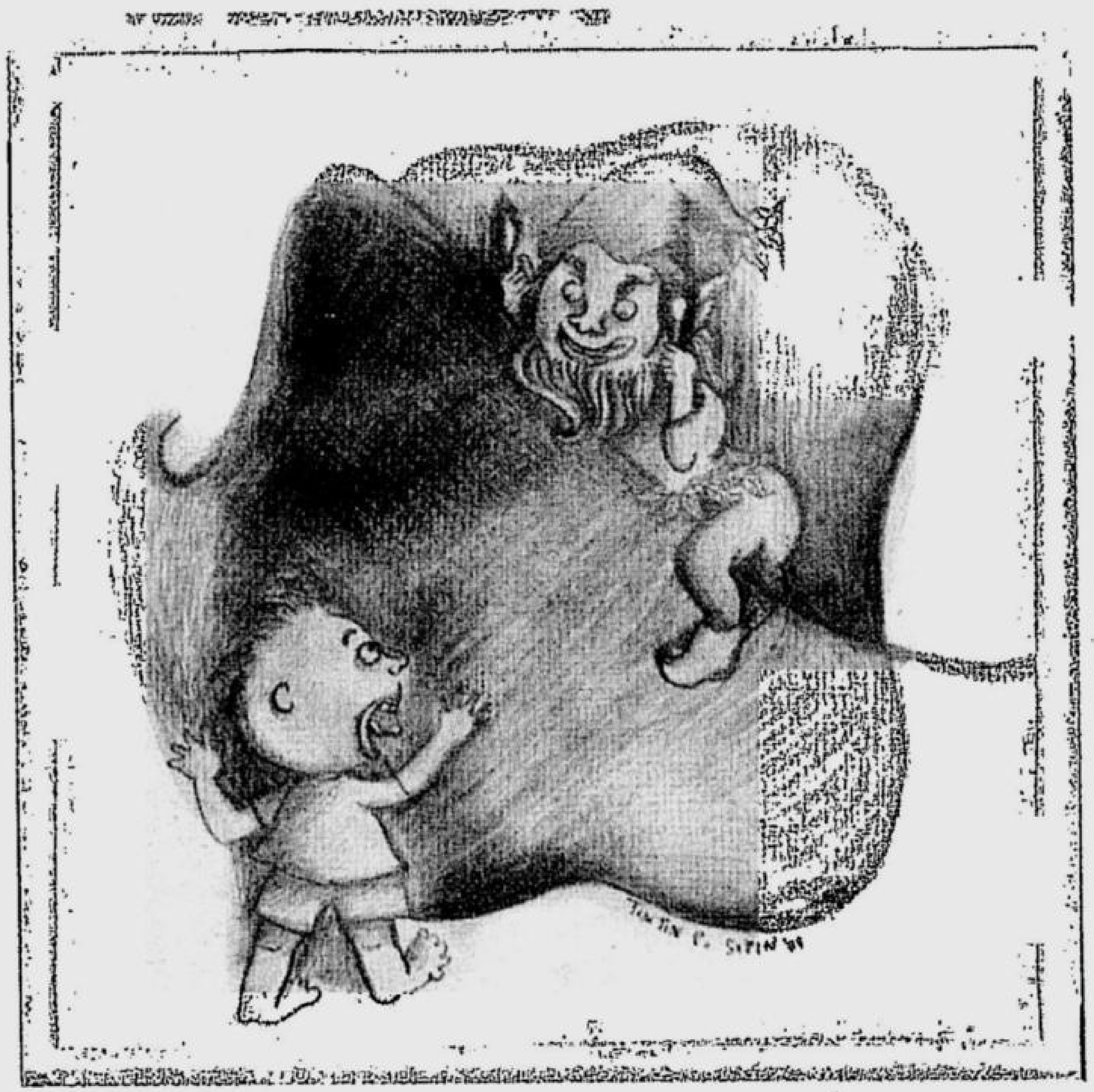
"Go!" she pushed him.

"But, *nanay*—"

"Go! Take a shower in the breeze. It's Friday anyway!"

Uté was pushed outside the house. His *nanay* locked the door. Slowly, Uté walked toward his cousins and friends. He looked up to the sunny skies, the raindrops felt good on his face and skin. It was cold and fresh.

His cousins and friends were happy to have him again in their plays. Uté forgot about the *malignos, aswangs, tikbalangs, kapres,* and *nunos.* It was fun to take a shower under a sunny breeze. He didn't want to believe in giant crabs anymore. And *dapdap* trees were lovely when they wore red flowers. And those mermaids and *siokoys,* why, he only laughed at them.



"Since then," Tio Jose concluded, "he once again took a bath every day and he no longer stunk. The end."

The children laughed.

"That was funny *Tio* Jose," Angelica said. "No baths every Tuesdays and Fridays, *naka!"*

Dona Teodora joined them. "I was listening to the story at the door. Children, you know who that little boy named Uté was?"

The children shook their heads.

"Who else but your *Tio* Jose!" Dona Teodora said loudly.

Surprised, the children burst laughing. "It was you! It was you!" they said, laughing and pointing at their *Tio* Jose.

J.E. *likes to read and collect history books. He lives in Kalayaan Village, Pasig City.*

Christine *is a product planner-designer. Some of her published works are "Pebbles in the Pond," "Polka Dot Mommy" and "Dalawang Puyo." She is a member of Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan.*

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THE MUSICAL BOOKWORM

Eleven-year-old Gaille Ramos will choose a book or a jamming session anytime over an afternoon with a Playstation

BY ELINE SANTOS

"THERE'S more to life than just Playstation, TV and cellphones," says 11-year-old Gaille Marie Olivia Ramos. "It's really fun playing instruments."

She plays four—yup, four!—instruments: the piano, the violin, the recorder and the flute.

Last Dec. 16, Gaille performed along with 86 other kids in a Christmas concert at St. Scholastica's College.

All of the melodies brought Christmas cheer, from classical pieces by Handel down to the enduring "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

For fun, Gaille and some of her friends jam together. They even play their own version of the Hogwarts theme.

"They're really weird songs," Gaille describes the stuff they make up.

But when she gives us a sample, it doesn't sound weird at all but very sweet.

She Likes V. . .Vo. . .Voldemort

Gaille prefers books to movies because the silver screen "takes away the imagination." Still, she enjoyed the film version of Harry Potter.

Harry is her favorite character, but surprisingly Voldemort is too.

"If Voldemort wasn't there, there wouldn't be anyone to fight," explains Gaille.

Reading is something she definitely enjoys. Among the stories she likes is Charlotte's Web, "because it's simple yet so sad." She also borrows Nancy Drew books from her ballet dancer-sister, Chriselle.

Campus journalist

Gaille is also a writer. She won 2nd and 3rd place in Ocean World's 1999 poetry writing contest. The following year, she bagged a gold medal for her Jubillee poem from the Catholic Educators Association of the Philippines.

And if isn't enough, this active young lady writes for their school paper, Little Blue Stockings, and is the secretary for the Student Council.

With music, books, writing, and school affairs filling up her time, it's no wonder this 'rrrific kid knows there's so much more to life than TV, computer games and cell phones.

MUSICAL GENES. Gaille's maternal grandmother is Leonor Kilayko, a famous pianist and her lolo, Paquito Kilayko, is a great conductor.

R U RRIFIC?

'Rrific kids are smart
'Rrific kids are fun
Some aren't in the honors list
But get their homework done

Somehow the world's
a better place
I know this much is true
Hey 'Rrific kid!
We know you're there
We love you 'cause you're you!

If you think you're `Rriffic' or know someone who is, fill out the nomination form below and send it to:

Junior Inquirer
'KIDS'R'RRIFIC' Page
Phil. Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces cor.
Yague & Mascardo Sts.
1231 Makati City

Chosen nominees will be featured on this page and will get a free Junior Inquirer T-shirt!

Kid 'r'rrific
nomination form

I nominate: ____________________

Age: ________

I think she's/he's 'Rrific because:
(Here's a tip! Write a detailed description of a good deed, project or accomplishment by your nominee.)
____
____
____
____
____
____
____
____

She/he lives at
____
____
____

and studies at
____

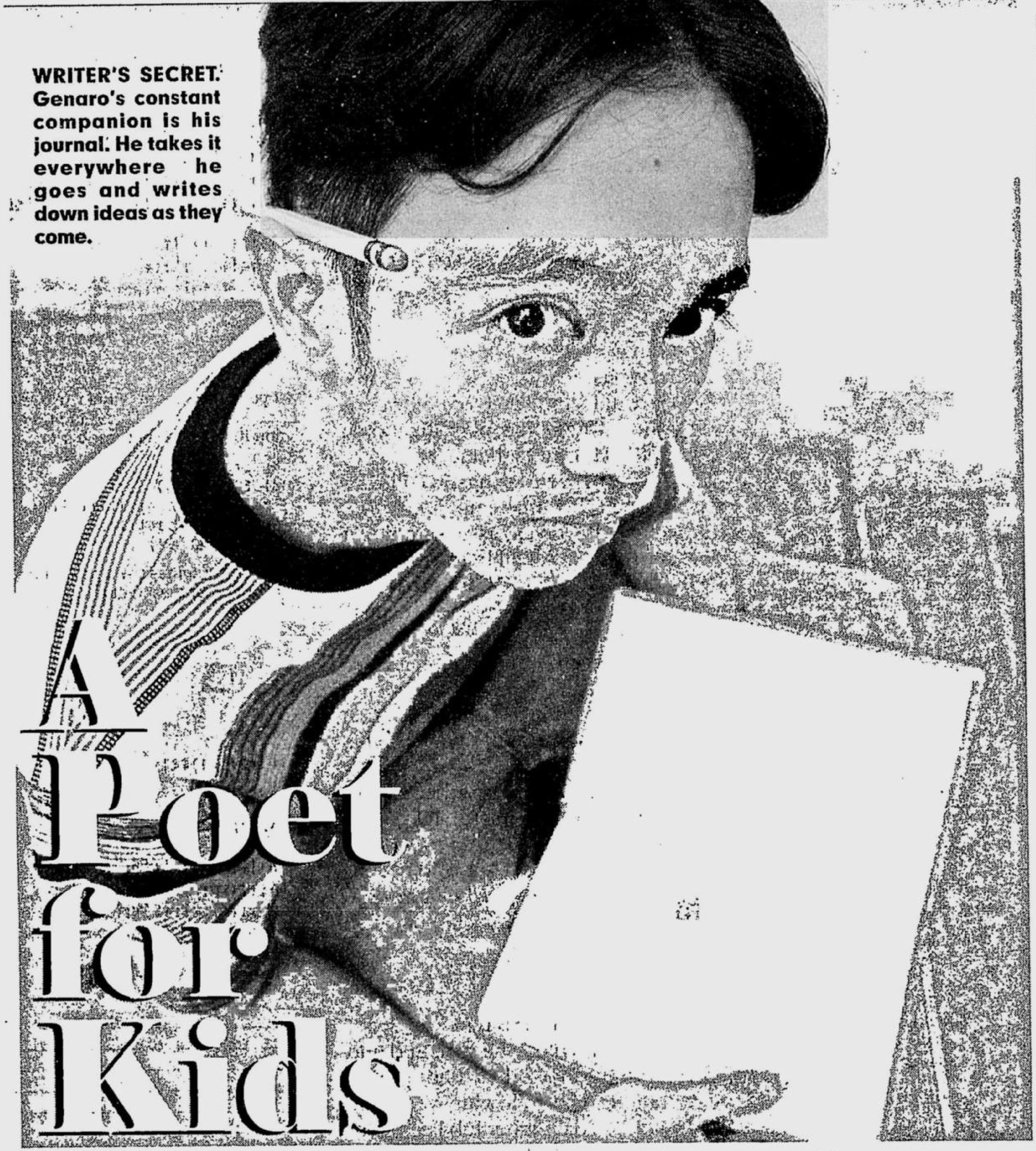
Her/his contact number is:
____

Sender's Name:
____

Sender's Age & School:
______, ____________________

Sender's Address:
____
____

Sender's Contact No.
____



WRITER'S SECRET. Genaro's constant companion is his journal. He takes it everywhere he goes and writes down ideas as they come.

A Poet for Kids

Get to know Genaro R. Gojo Cruz: one of the most prolific poets for Filipino children

BY ELINE SANTOS

DOES the name Genaro R. Gojo Cruz seem familiar? If you answer yes, it's because you've probably read one of his many poems that have appeared on JI.

Remember that one about the playmate who had to move to another town? What about that one about a dog named Puti? Or those poems about family members, fishballs, ice cream and *tsamporado*? Genaro's poems are all about life as a kid here in the Philippines.

"I always consider the reader. I write for them, not myself," Genaro says. He doesn't care much for awards. He wants most of all for his work "to be read by many people."

Most of us may know him only by name. But the students of Colegio Sta. Isabel of Laguna know the person behind the byline as Teacher Gene.

"He is a good writer and teacher," says his student Frances Valderrama. She adds that the 24-year-old Filipino and History teacher always tells lots of stories during his classes.

Teacher Gene says that if his students develop a "love for one's own culture and language," he would consider himself a successful educator. He also hopes that maybe two or three of his wards would become writers someday.

Genaro doesn't have a TV or a radio in Laguna where he works. "Back to basics," he says, "I'm tired of hi-tech." In the quiet province conducive to writing, the company he keeps is books.

"Surrounded by books, I am filled with peace," he declares as his eyes light up with true love.

Do you know a grown-up who

- is fun to be with
- has an exciting job
- keeps an amazing hobby
- is all of the above???

If you know a grown-up whom all kids will love, give him or her the stamp:

A.K.A. COOL

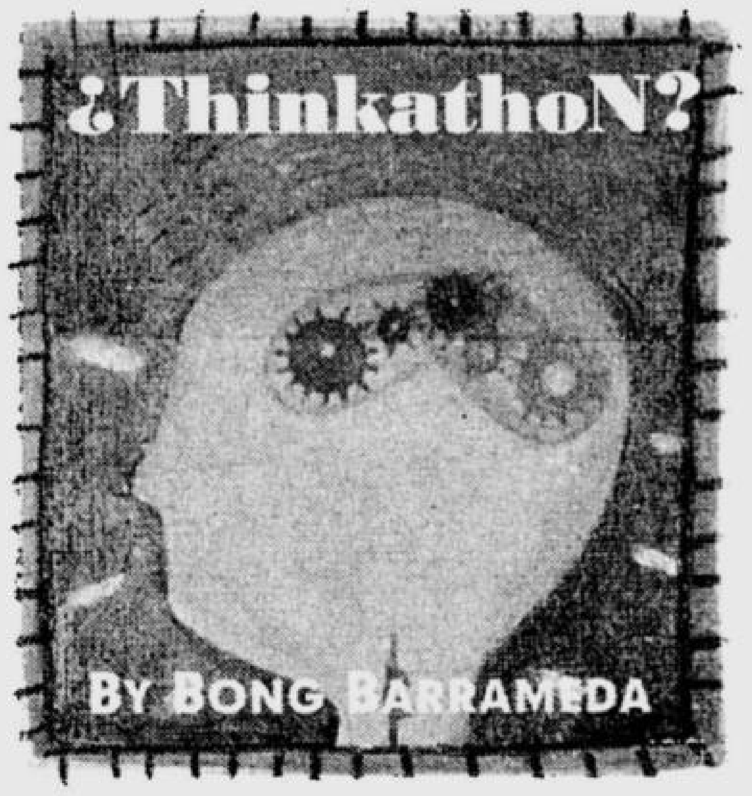
Just fill out the nomination form below and tell us why your fave grown-up is the absolute coolest. If your nominee is chosen, ***YOU'LL*** *get a free JI T-shirt! Now that's really cool.*

A.K.A. COOL
is an 'adult known as cool'.
They're the folks
in our own family
Or the people
we meet in school.

I nominate ________________.
He/She is ____ years old and is
my ________________________.
Here are five super solid
reasons why I think you should
write about him/her:
1)________________________;
2)________________________;
3)________________________;
4)________________________;
and
5)________________________.

My nominee lives at__________
__________________________.
Give him/her a call at__________
________________ or send him/
her an e-mail
at__________________.
By the way, I'm______________
__________________________.
I'm ______ years old.
My address is
__________________________.
You may call me at
__________________________.

Things/p 4



Horseplay

IT'S the Year of Horse, so why don't we do some quiz about names and terms that contain the word "horse." Can you giddyup your way to a good score by matching each description with its corresponding "horsey" answer listed at the bottom?

1. The slowest fish, moving around the ocean at just .002 kilometer per hour.

2. The old name for a steam-powered railroad locomotive or train.

3. In the Bible, they represent war, famine, pestilence, and death.

4. The title of a favorite short-story by D. H. Lawrence.

5. In Greek legend, a huge yet hollow wooden structure used by the attacking Greeks to gain entrance to the city of Troy, thus ending a 10-year war.

6. The English name of the local *malunggay.*

7. The title of a 1987 hit song by America.

8. In men's gymnastics, a padded oblong piece of apparatus that is raised off the floor and has two curved handles on the top.

9. A unit of energy or force equal in the United States to 745.7 watts.

10. A 1992 novel written by Cormac McCarthy.

11. A regular cast member of the 80s TV sitcom 'Iskul Bukol.'

12. A large marine arthropod of eastern North America and Asia that has a stiff pointed tail and rounded brown body.

13. An American Indian chief who defeated Gen. George Custer and his men in the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876.

14. A name for a Western cowboy movie.

15. A region at sea marked by high atmospheric pressure and light variable winds or calms

- "A Horse With No Name"
- "The Rocking-Horse Winner"
- Horsepower
- Pommel horse
- Horseradish tree
- Horse latitude
- Trojan horse
- Sea horse
- Horseshoe crab
- Iron horse
- Horse opera
- "All the Pretty Horses"
- Richie D'Horsie
- Crazy Horse
- The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

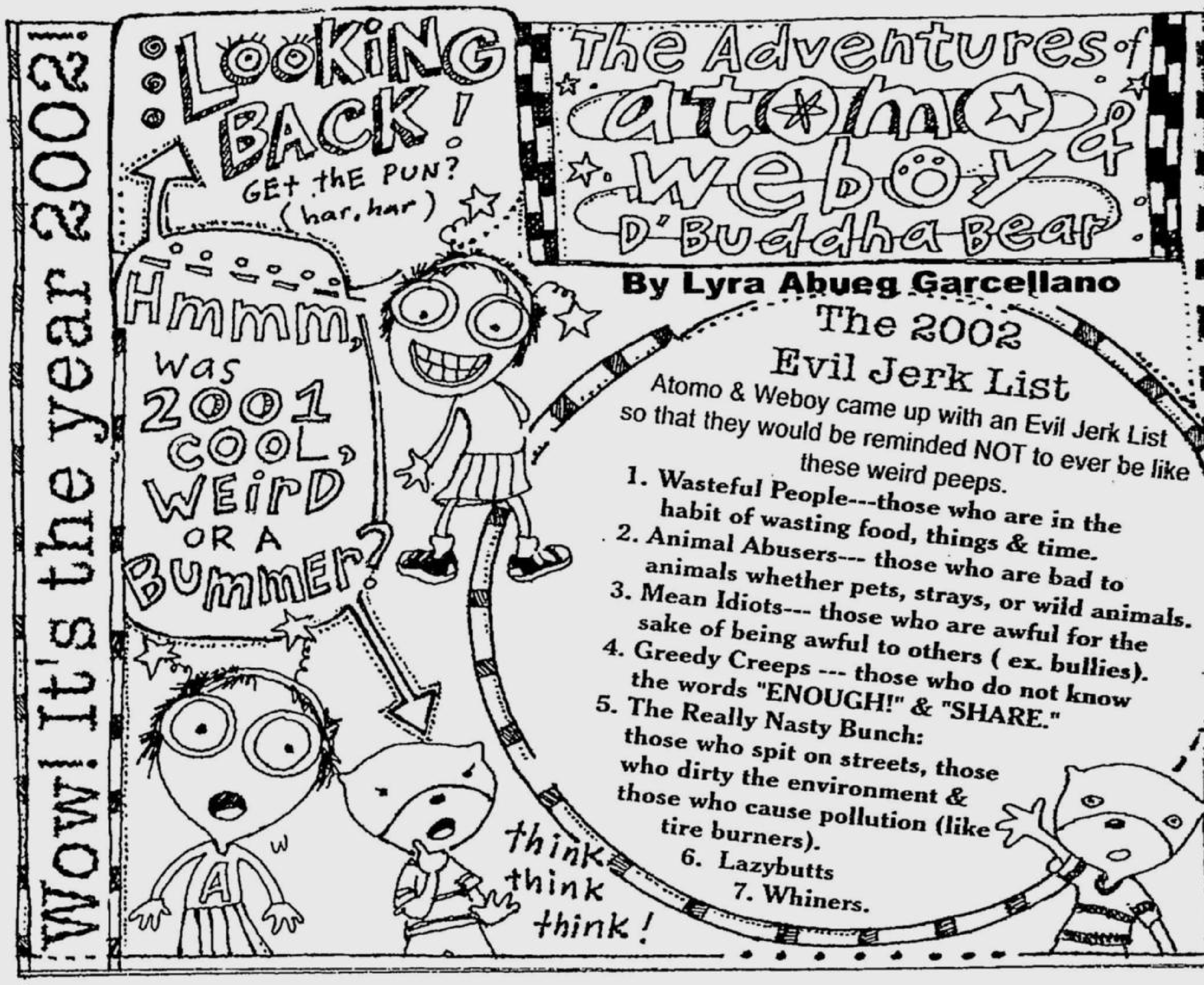
ANSWERS :

1. Sea horse
2. Iron horse
3. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse
4. "The Rocking-Horse Winner"
5. Trojan horse
6. Horseradish tree
7. "A Horse With No Name"
8. Pommel horse
9. Horsepower
10. "All the Pretty Horses"
11. Richie D'Horsie
12. Horseshoe crab
13. Crazy Horse
14. Horse opera
15. Horse latitude

RATINGS :

superbrain!
excellent!
good!

superbrain!	excellent!	good!
13 - 15	10 - 12	7 - 9


Wow! It's the year 2002!
LOOKING BACK!
GET the PUN? (har, har)
Hmmm, was 2001 COOL, WEIRD OR A BUMMER?
The Adventures of atomo & weboy D' Buddha Bear
A
think think think!

By Lyra Abueg Garcellano

The 2002 Evil Jerk List

Atomo & Weboy came up with an Evil Jerk List so that they would be reminded NOT to ever be like these weird peeps.

1. Wasteful People---those who are in the habit of wasting food, things & time.
2. Animal Abusers--- those who are bad to animals whether pets, strays, or wild animals.
3. Mean Idiots--- those who are awful for the sake of being awful to others (ex. bullies).
4. Greedy Creeps --- those who do not know the words "ENOUGH!" & "SHARE."
5. The Really Nasty Bunch: those who spit on streets, those who dirty the environment & those who cause pollution (like tire burners).
6. Lazybutts
7. Whiners.

A A M E A N I D I O T S
N B B K L N O P Q U B C
I C N L M W H I N E R S
M J C A D A P T S R A Z
A I D Z S S Q T U V G D
L F E Y E T R S W X R Y
A H G B F E Y E F H E G
B G H U O F E B V W E Y
U M N T C U M D U X D Z
S I J T L L P N O N Y A
E L K S B P A Z U S C T
R K H G U E P V Q R R H
S J I V F O Y Q E X E U
B R S T Q P W X G Y E H
C K R J I L S D W B P Z
D P L M N E T A F C S O

Look for these words!

Wasteful People
Animal Abusers
Mean Idiots
Greedy Creeps
Nasty Bunch
Lazybutts
Whiners

**Resolve to be nice this year.
Be smart. Be kind.
Don't be part of
the Evil Jerk List.**

One Nation, One Dream

By Natascha O. Ackerman
Illustration by Isa Nazareno

You, me, her and him
One mind, one love,
One nation and one dream
All for one and one for all.
We stand proud, we stand tall.

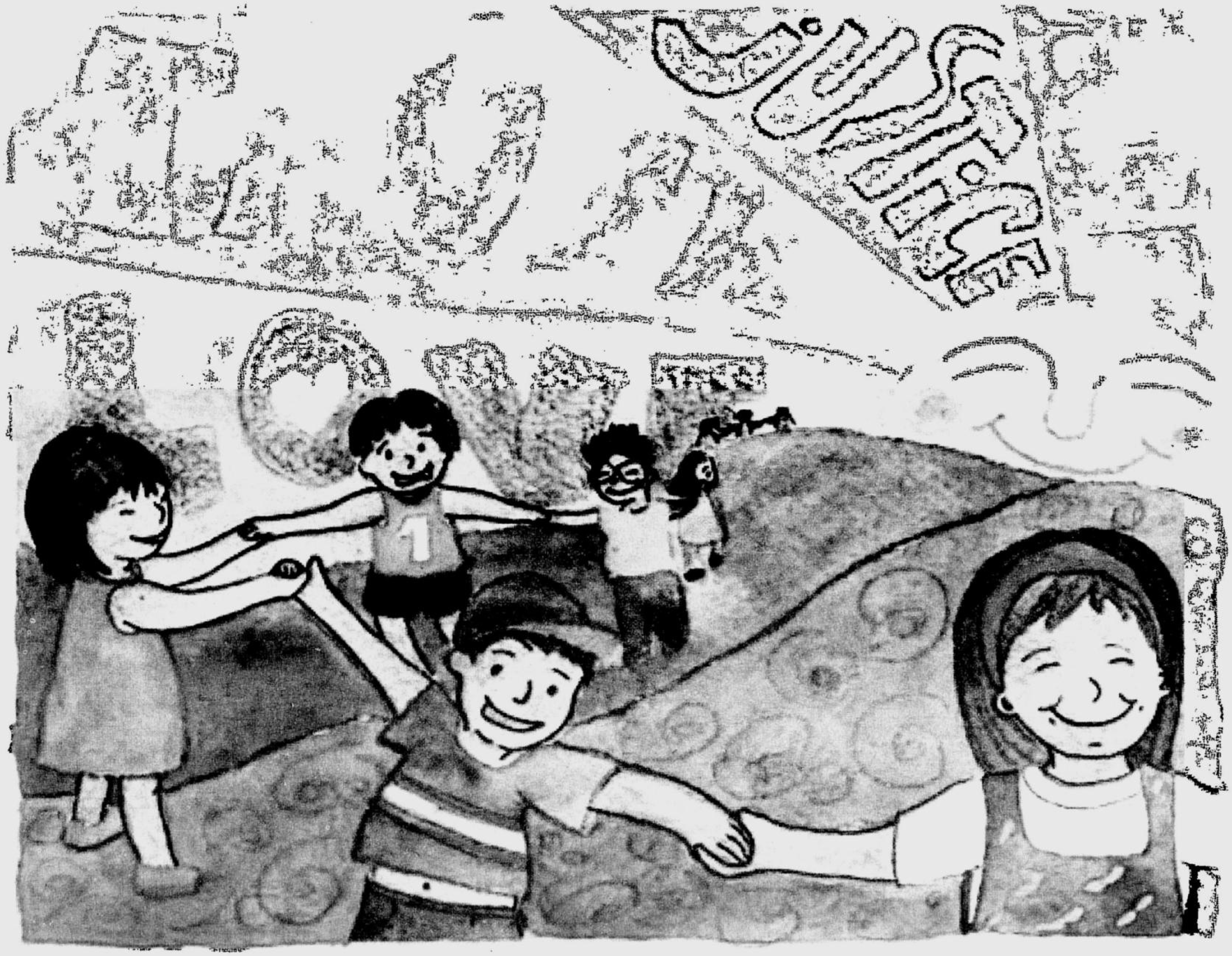
All of us have dreams but
Only some of us can see.
The truth which is that, we are free.
To talk, to move, to love and write
Through all day and through all night.

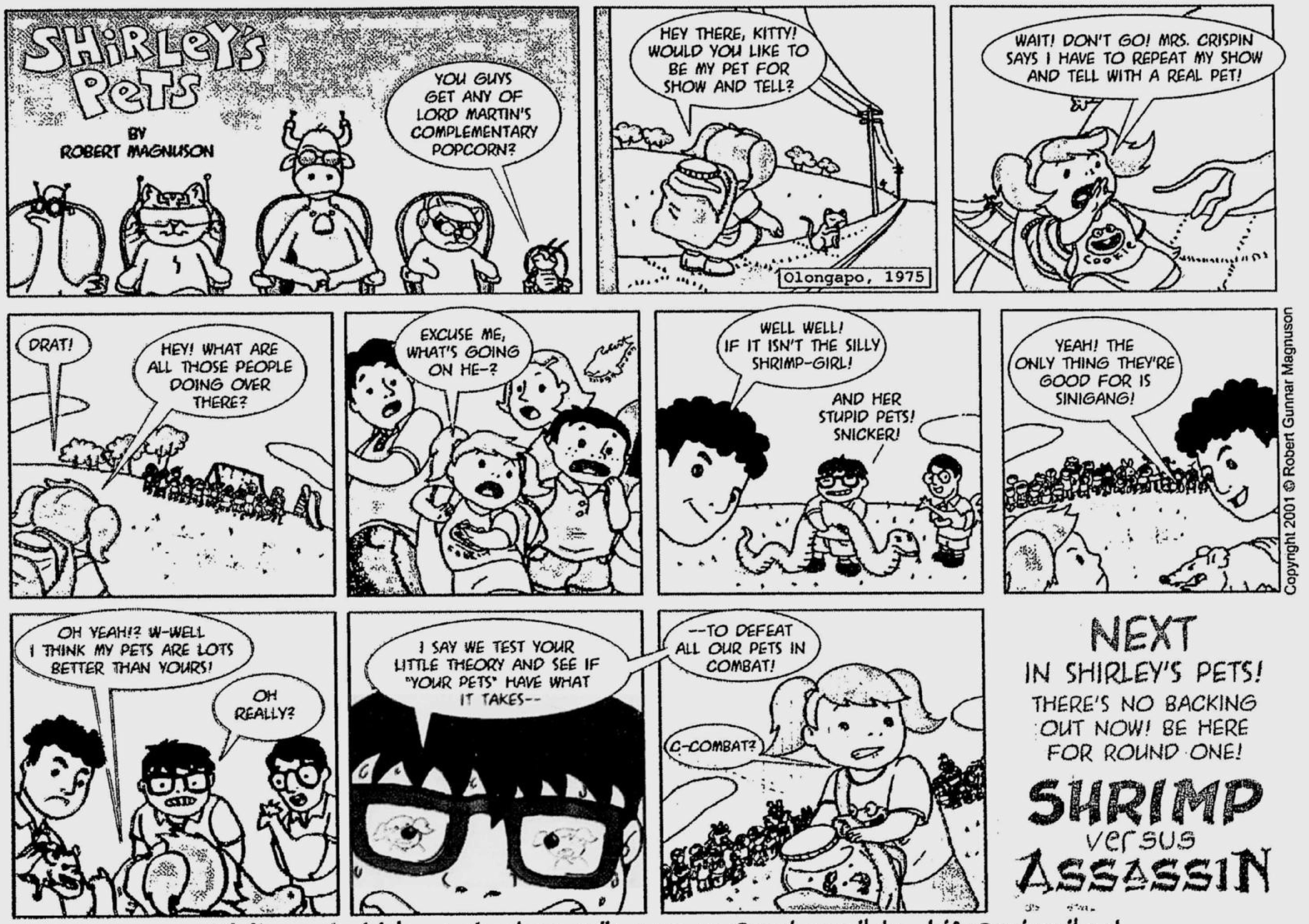
Let's hold our hand and be the light.
To guide us through our nation's rights.
We look afar and we look near,
For the light of our nation dear.

We have not wings we cannot soar
But the truth will only free us
And lies won't hurt no more.

If we hold on together,
We know our dreams will never die.
When justice would pass us by
And if love can help
Then let it be the solution for you and me.

***Natascha**, 12, studies in Southville International School, Paranaque.*
***Isa** is currently taking up her MA in Art History at UP Diliman. She is a member of Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan.*




SHiRLEY'S PETS
BY ROBERT MAGNUSON
YOU GUYS GET ANY OF LORD MARTIN'S COMPLEMENTARY POPCORN?
HEY THERE, KITTY! WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE MY PET FOR SHOW AND TELL?
Olongapo, 1975
WAIT! DON'T GO! MRS. CRISPIN SAYS I HAVE TO REPEAT MY SHOW AND TELL WITH A REAL PET!
COOKIE
DRAT!
HEY! WHAT ARE ALL THOSE PEOPLE DOING OVER THERE?
EXCUSE ME, WHAT'S GOING ON HE-?
WELL WELL! IF IT ISN'T THE SILLY SHRIMP-GIRL!
AND HER STUPID PETS! SNICKER!
YEAH! THE ONLY THING THEY'RE GOOD FOR IS SINIGANG!
Copyright 2001 © Robert Gunnar Magnuson
OH YEAH!? W-WELL I THINK MY PETS ARE LOTS BETTER THAN YOURS!
OH REALLY?
I SAY WE TEST YOUR LITTLE THEORY AND SEE IF "YOUR PETS" HAVE WHAT IT TAKES--
--TO DEFEAT ALL OUR PETS IN COMBAT!
C-COMBAT?
NEXT IN SHIRLEY'S PETS!
THERE'S NO BACKING OUT NOW! BE HERE FOR ROUND ONE!
SHRIMP versus ASSASSIN

Visit us at shirleyspets.cheesedip.com or Send email to shifu@animail.net

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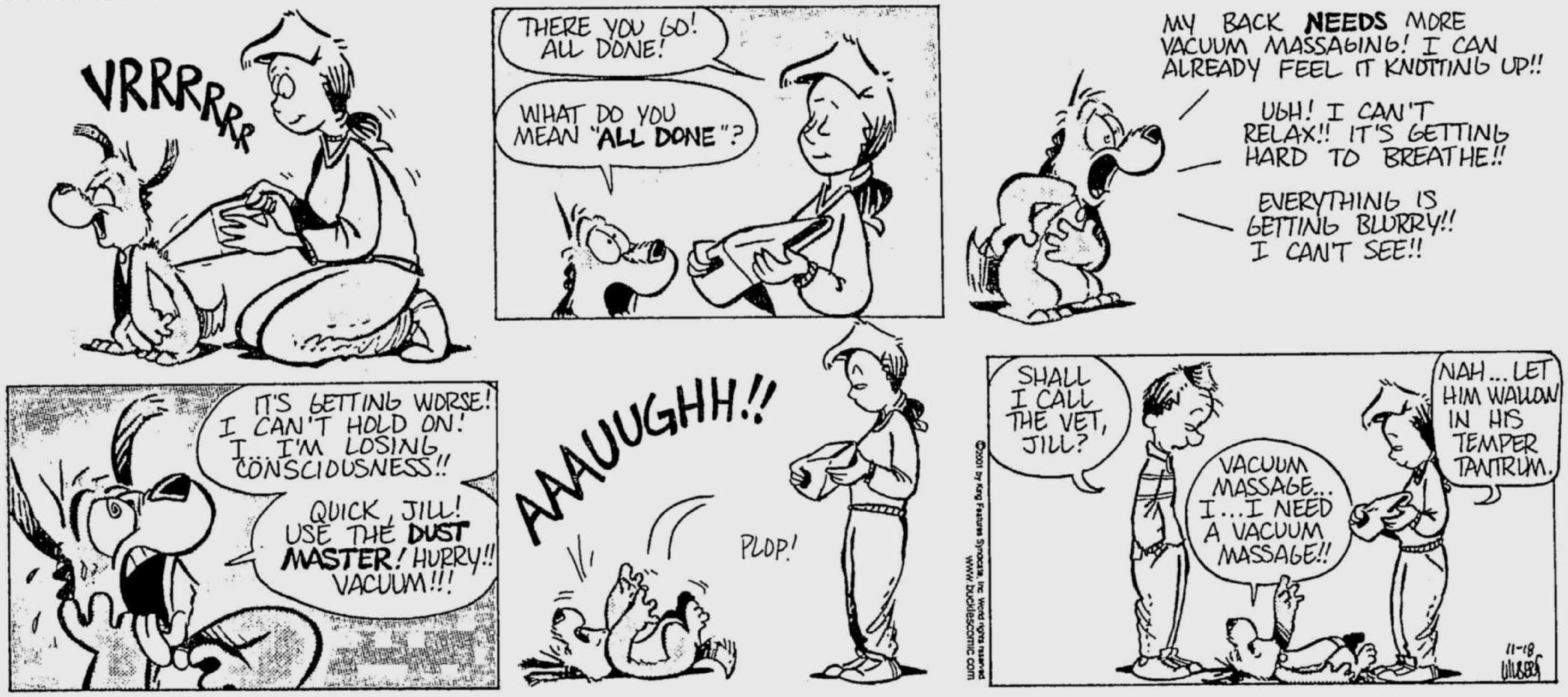
BUCKLES

BY DAVID GILBERT


VRRRRRR
THERE YOU GO! ALL DONE!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "ALL DONE"?
MY BACK NEEDS MORE VACUUM MASSAGING! I CAN ALREADY FEEL IT KNOTTING UP!!
UGH! I CAN'T RELAX!! IT'S GETTING HARD TO BREATHE!!
EVERYTHING IS GETTING BLURRY!! I CAN'T SEE!!
IT'S GETTING WORSE! I CAN'T HOLD ON! I... I'M LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS!!
QUICK, JILL! USE THE DUST MASTER! HURRY!! VACUUM!!!
AAAUUGHH!!
PLOP!
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SHALL I CALL THE VET, JILL?
VACUUM MASSAGE... I...I NEED A VACUUM MASSAGE!!
NAH... LET HIM WALLOW IN HIS TEMPER TANTRUM.
11-18 GILBERT